

**Exploring the interpersonal and intergroup consequences of
cross-group romantic relationships**

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Abstract

Extensive research over the past half century suggests that many types of intergroup interactions, including contact between strangers, acquaintances, roommates, neighbours, workmates, and teammates, have positive implications for intergroup relations. This extensive research has, moreover, revealed that intimate forms of intergroup contact, such as cross-group friendships, are particularly effective at improving intergroup attitudes. Despite this emphasis on intimate cross-group contact, however, there has yet to be an investigation into the intergroup outcomes of cross-group romantic relationships. The current research utilises and unites research on interpersonal relationships and intergroup contact theory in order to investigate the predictors and outcomes of cross-group romantic relationships. Across a series of cross-sectional and experimental studies, I examine the interpersonal and intergroup consequences of having direct and extended cross-group romantic contact. In addition, I explore intergroup preferences regarding romantic relationships and how the quality and norms associated with cross-group relationships are associated with these preferences. Results indicate that romantic preferences and choices are predicted by a powerful and pervasive ingroup bias. Importantly, the findings also reveal that although there are similarities with other forms of intergroup contact, cross-group romantic relationships are a unique form of contact. Similar to cross-group friendships, for example, extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships is associated with positive intergroup attitudes via perceived ingroup norms. Distinct from friendships, however, results reveal that cross-group partners continue to be maligned and this disapproval is negatively associated with their relationship quality and intergroup attitudes. Nevertheless, as

extended contact predicts positive outcomes, future research and interventions could apply the current findings to reduce prejudice towards cross-group couples which would not only benefit the relationships, but would also promote a more harmonious society.

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Chapter 1

Intergroup contact

Interactions between members of distinct social groups have long been recognised as a source of potential conflict and prejudice (e.g., Sumner, 1906). Often surrounded by anxiety, contempt, and mutual distrust, intergroup contact can increase ingroup bias, exacerbate existing intergroup tensions and have, at times, catastrophic consequences (e.g., Brewer, 1999; LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Plant & Devine, 2003; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Examples of the negative consequences of intergroup contact can range from minimal experimental group paradigms in which participants exhibit benign ingroup biases despite being randomly assigned to meaningless teams, to despicable acts of segregation, war, and genocide (e.g., Brewer, 1979, 1999; Paolini, Harwood, & Rubin, 2010; Sumner, 1906).

Acknowledging that intergroup contact is inevitable in modern multicultural societies and concerned at the ease with which intergroup contact can produce negative outcomes, social psychologists have attempted to understand and alleviate intergroup tension and prejudice (e.g., Allport, 1954; Brewer, 1979; Hewstone & R. Brown, 1986; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Tajfel & J. C. Turner, 1986; R. N. Turner, Hewstone, Voci, Paolini, & Christ, 2007b; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997). One consequence of this extensive research is that intergroup contact has, somewhat paradoxically, been proposed as something of a panacea of intergroup conflict (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Indeed, a vast amount of research has illustrated that intergroup contact, under certain circumstances, not only reduces intergroup conflict and

prejudice, but it also promotes positive attitudes and fosters harmonious intergroup relations (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; 2008).

1.1 Intergroup contact theory

Integral to understanding when intergroup contact promotes positive intergroup attitudes is the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954). Heralded as “social science’s major contribution to reducing intergroup bias and conflict” (Gaertner, Dovidio, & Bachman, 1996, p. 272), the hypothesis suggests that in order for intergroup contact to produce positive outcomes, four conditions of the contact situation must be met. Individuals, regardless of group membership, should share *equal status*, they should *cooperate* to achieve *common goals*, and have *support from authorities, law, or custom*.

Consistent with the hypothesis, a large scale meta-analysis using 713 independent samples from 515 studies has demonstrated that intergroup contact situations which are structured to satisfy these four conditions have a greater positive effect on intergroup attitudes than situations which do not meet these conditions (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Even when these conditions are not met, however, intergroup contact can still produce positive intergroup outcomes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). This suggests that although the four conditions proposed by Allport (1954) are not essential for intergroup contact to reduce prejudice, they are important facilitating factors that “enhance the tendency for positive contact outcomes to emerge” (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, p. 766).

Arguably, the most important aspect of Allport’s (1954) hypothesis was not whether the proposed conditions were necessary or facilitating factors, but the effect it has subsequently had on intergroup research. Specifically, the hypothesis articulated in *The Nature of Prejudice* has provided the impetus for over 750

published and unpublished studies examining intergroup contact using a variety of social groups across a wide range of situations, cultures, and countries (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Such comprehensive research has not only indicated when and under what moderating conditions intergroup contact will produce beneficial intergroup outcomes, the research has also revealed how and through what mediating mechanisms intergroup contact influences intergroup attitudes (e.g., Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; R. N. Turner et al., 2007b).

Furthermore, this abundance of research has expanded the scope of intergroup contact to include how intergroup contact generalises from interpersonal contact to intergroup attitudes (e.g., Brewer & Miller, 1988; R. Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Hewstone & R. Brown, 1986; Pettigrew, 1997, 1998, 2009), and how more distal forms of intergroup contact, including ‘extended contact’ (Wright et al., 1997) and ‘imagined contact’ (Crisp & Turner, 2009), can also impact intergroup attitudes. As a consequence of such thorough research, prominent researchers have suggested that the Contact Hypothesis should no longer be considered a ‘hypothesis’ but should be acknowledged as a “fully-fledged *theory*” (Hewstone & Swart, 2011, p. 380; see also Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008).

1.2 Cross-group friendships

One of the most significant developments of intergroup contact theory is the recognition of the importance of intimacy in intergroup interactions (Pettigrew, 1997; 1998; R. N. Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007a). Although Allport (1954) and others (e.g., Amir, 1969; Cook, 1962) alluded to the effectiveness of friendly intergroup contact over initial acquaintanceships, Pettigrew (1997) was the first to explicitly assert that cross-group friendships are an especially important form of intergroup contact. As friendships develop under similar conditions stipulated by the

contact hypothesis (e.g., cooperation, common goals, and equal status) and are developed over time and across many different situations, friendships are believed to be more conducive to promoting positive intergroup attitudes than less intimate forms of contact (Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew, & Wright, 2011; Pettigrew, 1997; 1998; R. N. Turner et al., 2007b).

Illustrating the importance of cross-group friendships, Pettigrew (1997) examined seven types of cross-group friendships in four different European countries (France, Great Britain, The Netherlands, and West Germany). Consistent with hypotheses, Pettigrew (1997) found that the number of cross-group friendships individuals had was positively correlated with more liberal ideologies (e.g., more immigrant friendly policies) and significantly lower levels of prejudice (e.g., more sympathy and admiration for the outgroup). Combining this discovery with previous suggestions (e.g., Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969; Cook, 1962), Pettigrew (1998) formally suggested a reformulation of the Contact Hypothesis to include what he proposed as the fifth facilitating condition; “friendship potential”.

Since this reformulation, numerous studies have verified the importance of intimacy in intergroup contact (e.g., Davies et al., 2011; Feddes, Noack, & Rutland, 2009; Paolini, Hewstone, & Cairns, 2007; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a). Indeed, a recent meta-analysis of 208 samples revealed that cross-group friendships are not only significantly associated with lower levels of prejudice, there is ample cross-sectional, experimental, and longitudinal findings to be confident that cross-group friendships actually *cause* improvements in intergroup attitudes (Davies et al., 2011).

1.3 Extended cross-group contact

Although the finding that cross-group friendships significantly reduce intergroup prejudice is extremely encouraging, there is one inevitable drawback to this form of intergroup contact (R. N. Turner, Hewstone, Voci, & Vonofakou, 2008). Due to issues of segregation and group related violence, direct contact is not always feasible or even safe. It is, however, in these situations that the prejudice reducing qualities of intergroup contact are most needed (R. N. Turner et al., 2008). This has resulted in an apparent catch-22 situation in which intergroup contact is needed to reduce prejudice but prejudice restricts intergroup contact. Researchers have, however, put forward a solution: extended contact (Wright et al., 1997; see also L. Cameron, Rutland, Hossain, & Petley, 2011; De Tezanos-Pinto, Bratt, & R. Brown, 2010; Paolini et al., 2007; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a, 2007b, 2008).

The extended contact hypothesis proposes that the mere “knowledge that an ingroup member has a close relationship with an outgroup member can lead to more positive intergroup attitudes” (Wright et al., 1997, p. 73). As friendships represent close relationships, this vicarious experience of intergroup contact has generally been studied in regards to cross-group friendships (e.g., Paolini et al., 2007; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a, 2008; Wright et al., 1997). Investigations into this distal form of intergroup contact have found that simply knowing an ingroup member who is friends with an outgroup member positively influences intergroup attitudes in a way similar to direct intergroup friendships (R. N. Turner et al., 2007a, 2008; Wright et al., 1997). Interestingly, a number of studies have even found that extended contact with cross-group friendships has a more powerful influence on intergroup attitudes than direct cross-group friendships (De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; Paolini et al., 2007, Study 3; R. N. Turner et al., 2008, 2007a, Study 2).

Combining the impact of direct and extended cross-group friendships on intergroup attitudes reveals that intimate forms of cross-group contact are beneficial to intergroup relations. Specifically, developing friendships with outgroup members causes a reduction in prejudice and promotes positive intergroup attitudes (e.g., Davies et al., 2011; Pettigrew, 1997, 1998; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a). Moreover, even when direct contact is not possible, simply knowing of a cross-group friendship can reap the same beneficial outcomes (e.g., De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a, 2008). In sum, these findings suggest that despite the possibility that intergroup contact can aggravate intergroup tensions (e.g., Brewer, 1979, 1999; Paolini et al., 2010; Sumner, 1906), when intergroup contact is perceived to be friendly and intimate, it can have an immensely positive impact on intergroup attitudes (e.g., Allport, 1954; Davies et al., 2011; Pettigrew, 1997; R. N. Turner, 2007a, 2007b, 2008).

1.4 How direct and extended contact reduce prejudice

Expanding upon Allport's (1954) optimal conditions for intergroup contact and Pettigrew's (1998) later reformulation, numerous researchers have attempted to advance the field by identifying how, when, and why intergroup contact promotes positive intergroup attitudes (e.g., Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; R. N. Turner et al., 2007b). In this section, I present a number of characteristics and mechanisms of direct and extended cross-group contact that are proposed to influence intergroup attitudes.

1.4.1 Quality of contact

The quality of intergroup contact is an undoubtedly important determining factor in how intergroup contact influences intergroup attitudes (e.g., Allport, 1954;

Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Voci & Hewstone, 2003). Intergroup encounters that are strained, unsatisfying, and negatively perceived can have adverse effects on individuals' attitudes, resulting in increased anxiety and prejudice (e.g., Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; Voci & Hewstone, 2003). Conversely, positive encounters with outgroup members can reduce ingroup biases and promote healthy intergroup relationships and attitudes (e.g., Allport, 1954; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Prestwich, Kenworthy, Wilson, & Kwan-Tat, 2008; Voci & Hewstone, 2003; Wilder, 1984). The importance of the quality of contact has, moreover, been recognised as an important predictor of intergroup outcomes in both direct and extended forms of intergroup contact (e.g., Prestwich et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997).

1.4.1.1 Quality of direct contact

Illustrating the importance of quality in intergroup contact, Prestwich and colleagues (2008) investigated how the quantity and quality of general intergroup contact influenced White individuals' explicit and implicit attitudes towards South Asian people in the UK. They found that the quality, but not the quantity, of intergroup contact was significantly associated with more positive explicit attitudes towards South Asians. Although the quality of general intergroup contact was not associated with implicit attitudes towards South Asians, the findings suggest that having pleasant and positive experiences with outgroup members, regardless of the amount of contact, is sufficient to promote consciously accessible positive attitudes towards outgroups.

Research investigating friendly cross-group contact also emphasises the importance of contact quality over contact quantity. As mentioned above, cross-group friendships are thought to promote more positive attitudes than less intimate

forms of intergroup contact because they imply higher quality intergroup contact (e.g., Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969; Pettigrew, 1997, 1998; R. N. Turner et al., 2007b). In support of this assertion, research has highlighted that certain characteristics of cross-group friendships are more powerful predictors of positive intergroup attitudes than others (e.g., Davies et al., 2011; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a).

In their meta-analysis examining the effects of a range of cross-group friendship measures on intergroup attitudes, Davies et al. (2011) found that every measure of cross-group friendships considered was associated with lower levels of prejudice. Indicators of high quality, responsive friendships (e.g., time spent with outgroup friend and amount of self-disclosure to outgroup friends), however, yielded larger effect sizes than operationalisations of friendships which only indicated the quantity of contact (e.g., number of outgroup friends and proportion of outgroup friends). This suggests that meaningful, intimate interactions between members of different social groups are important in producing positive intergroup attitudes and that quality of contact is more powerful than the actual number of interactions for promoting these positive intergroup attitudes.

1.4.1.2 Quality of extended contact

As an exemplar of intergroup contact, the quality of the interaction between a known ingroup member and an outgroup member plays an important role in how extended intergroup contact influences intergroup attitudes (e.g., R. N. Turner et al., 2007b; Wright et al., 1997). If the intergroup relationship is perceived to be of high quality, such as a friendship, then vicarious experiences with such contact should promote more positive expectations of intergroup contact, greater tolerance towards outgroup members, and reduce prejudice. Conversely, if the contact is perceived to be negative or hostile, the negative example may deter individuals from engaging in

intergroup contact and exacerbate intergroup tensions (e.g., R. N. Turner, et al., 2007b; Wright et al., 1997).

Highlighting the importance of extended contact quality, Wright and colleagues (1997, Study 4) conducted an experiment investigating how the closeness of a relationship between an ingroup member and an outgroup member influenced the ingroup biases of individuals who had extended contact with the interaction. Using a minimal group paradigm, participants were allocated to one of two random groups and then watched an ingroup member interact with an outgroup member in either a friendly, neutral, or hostile way (both group members were actually confederates). As expected, participants who had extended contact with a neutral or hostile relationship reported clear biases against the outgroup. Participants who had extended contact with a high quality, friendly interaction, however, reported no such bias. Furthermore, the decrease in bias shown in the high quality extended contact condition was a consequence of improved evaluations of the outgroup rather than a less positive evaluation of the ingroup. These findings, therefore, suggest that extended contact with high quality cross-group relationships promotes more positive attitudes towards the outgroup and illustrates the importance of the quality of extended contact.

Building upon Wright et al.'s (1997) findings, L. Cameron and Rutland (2006) implemented an intervention promoting high quality extended contact to improve the intergroup attitudes of primary school children. Non-disabled primary school children were read stories portraying a cross-group friendship between a non-disabled child (ingroup member) and a disabled child (outgroup member). After 6 weeks of the intervention, children who were read the extended contact story reported improved attitudes towards disabled people compared to a control group. As both the friendship and the two children in the story were "presented in a positive

light” (p. 475), the findings of this intervention, together with Wright et al.’s (1997) experiment, illustrate the importance of the quality of extended contact, and further suggest that extended contact with a high quality cross-group relationship, via a relatively simple intervention, can promote significant positive intergroup outcomes in real-world settings.

1.4.2 Intergroup anxiety

Due to a range of negative expectations and perceived threats, including feelings of awkwardness, fear of rejection, fear of causing inadvertent offence, and fear of the unknown, interactions between members of different social groups have the “potential for intense social anxiety” (Plant & Devine, 2003, p. 791; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). This intergroup anxiety, furthermore, can cause great emotional distress for individuals, preventing them from engaging in intergroup contact and poisoning intergroup interactions and experiences when contact does occur (Stephan & Stephan, 1985; see also R. N. Turner et al., 2007b). Nevertheless, a great deal of research has identified that intergroup anxiety plays an important role in how high quality intergroup contact promotes positive intergroup attitudes (e.g., Paolini, Hewstone, Cairns, & Voci, 2004; Plant & Devine, 2003; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2008; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a, 2007b, 2008). Specifically, having high quality direct or extended contact is thought to reduce intergroup anxiety which, in turn, reduces intergroup biases and promotes positive intergroup attitudes and expectations.

1.4.2.1 Anxiety in direct contact

A recent meta-analysis exploring how intergroup contact reduces intergroup prejudice revealed that the large majority of studies which have explored the mediating factors between intergroup contact and intergroup attitudes investigated

the mediating role of intergroup anxiety (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Indeed, of the 54 studies eligible for inclusion in the meta-analysis, 45 studies included intergroup anxiety as a mediator, compared to only 14 studies which investigated empathy and 11 studies which examined knowledge as a mediating process. Importantly, the meta-analysis also revealed that intergroup anxiety was a consistently strong mediator of intergroup contact.

Acknowledging the important role of intergroup anxiety, Prestwich and colleagues (2008) also investigated how the quality and quantity of intergroup contact, mediated by reduced intergroup anxiety, influenced explicit and implicit intergroup attitudes. Supporting previous research, reduced intergroup anxiety was found to significantly mediate the relationship between contact quality and explicit attitudes (e.g., Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Moreover, expanding upon previous research, the results also revealed that intergroup anxiety mediated the relationship between contact quantity and implicit attitudes, illustrating the powerful mediating effect of intergroup anxiety on both conscious and subconscious attitudes.

Intergroup anxiety has also been found to influence how intimate forms of cross-group contact influence intergroup attitudes. R. N. Turner and colleagues, for example, explored the mediating properties of intergroup anxiety between cross-group friendships and explicit attitudes (R. N. Turner & Feddes, 2011; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a, 2007b). In a cross-sectional study involving White children's contact and attitudes towards South Asians in Britain, cross-group friendships were found to positively predict outgroup attitudes, a relationship which was mediated by reduced intergroup anxiety (R. N. Turner et al., 2007a, Study 1). In addition, a longitudinal study investigating cross-group friendships at university, revealed that having an outgroup friend at the start of university predicted more positive general outgroup

attitudes after 6 weeks, again, mediated by reduced intergroup anxiety (R. N. Turner & Feddes, 2011). Moreover, research examining the attitudes of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland (Paolini et al., 2004), and heterosexuals' attitudes towards homosexuals (Vonofakou, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007) further attest to the mediating properties of reduced intergroup anxiety between intergroup contact and positive intergroup attitudes.

1.4.2.2 Anxiety in extended contact

Intergroup anxiety has also emerged as an important mediator between more distal forms of intergroup contact and intergroup attitudes (e.g., De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a, studies 2 and 3; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997). As predicted by extended contact theory (Wright et al., 1997), numerous studies have illustrated that just learning about an ingroup member interacting in a positive manner with an outgroup member reduces apprehension towards outgroups which, in turn, promotes more positive intergroup attitudes (e.g., De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; Paolini et al., 2004; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a, studies 2 and 3; R. N. Turner et al., 2008).

In the first investigation of Wright et al.'s (1997) proposed mediators of how extended contact produces positive intergroup attitudes, R. N. Turner et al. (2008) found strong support for the mediating role of reduced intergroup anxiety. In two separate studies, intergroup anxiety mediated the positive influence of White individuals' extended contact with South Asian people, even when controlling for their level of direct contact and three other proposed mediators (ingroup norms, outgroup norms, and inclusion of other in the self). Moreover, further studies using different groups in different countries, including school children in Norway and Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, also find similar levels of support for

the mediating role of intergroup anxiety in promoting positive intergroup attitudes from extended contact (e.g., De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; Paolini et al., 2004).

As even the thought of intergroup interactions can elicit enough anxiety to prevent individuals from engaging in intergroup contact (Stephan & Stephan, 1985), the role of reduced intergroup anxiety in producing positive intergroup outcomes from extended contact is particularly important (e.g., R. N. Turner et al., 2007b; Wright et al., 1997). Highly anxious individuals, may, for example, not be willing to interact with an outgroup member, or may be too anxious to reap the benefits of direct intergroup contact (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Extended contact could, however, provide highly anxious individuals an opportunity to witness intergroup contact from a safe distance, thereby not eliciting the negative outcomes associated with intergroup anxiety (e.g., Wright et al., 1997). Without the impediment of intergroup anxiety, then, these individuals could develop a more positive perception of the outgroup and consequently hold more positive intergroup attitudes (e.g., Paolini et al., 2004; R. N. Turner et al., 2007b; Wright et al., 1997). Extending this reasoning, extended contact may not only be effective at promoting positive intergroup attitudes but also in encouraging intergroup contact for those who are anxious of such interactions. Notably, the vicarious experience of intergroup contact could reduce their intergroup anxiety to such an extent that they would be more willing and more open to engaging in actual intergroup contact (e.g., R. N. Turner et al., 2007b).

1.4.3 Norms

The powerful nature of group norms in intergroup contact has long been established (e.g., Allport, 1954; Asch, 1956; Pettigrew, 1958; Sherif, 1936). One of Allport's (1954) four essential conditions for reducing prejudice, for example,

stipulated that intergroup contact must be supported by authority, laws, and customs. Such institutional and societal support for intergroup contact helps to establish norms of acceptance and encourages positive expectations and attitudes towards intergroup contact in society, whilst also discouraging and punishing individuals if they violate the norm (Pettigrew, 1991). In addition, this normative support is also thought to facilitate the attainment of the other optimal conditions, helping to ensure that individuals share equal status and cooperate to achieve common goals, all of which are integral to the success of intergroup contact (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1997).

In addition to the broader social context, norms associated with specific groups are extremely influential in how intergroup contact impacts intergroup attitudes (e.g., De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1996; Terry & Hogg, 1996; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997). Notably, when individuals identify themselves as group members, they are highly influenced by the norms and attitudes of that group (e.g., De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; Jetten et al., 1996; Terry & Hogg, 1996; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997). The behaviours of ingroup members serve as exemplars for fellow ingroup members to follow and the approval of ingroup members represent the endorsement of particular forms of contact, attitudes, and actions. With these exemplars and approvals, ingroup members understand what is expected of them and know what attitudes and behaviours are considered acceptable. Those who follow these ingroup norms are accepted and remain ingroup members, whereas those group members who go against the norms risk disapproval and even rejection from the ingroup (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996; Terry & Hogg, 1996; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997). In sum, as group memberships are important social identities, the consequences of adhering to or violating the norms endorsed by the ingroup are powerful

determinants of the behaviours of ingroup members (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996, Terry & Hogg, 1996; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997).

Although not as powerful as ingroup norms (Hewstone & Swart, 2011; Jetten et al., 1996), the perceived norms of outgroups also influence individuals' intergroup behaviours and attitudes (e.g., L. Cameron et al., 2011; Jetten et al., 1996; Pettigrew, 1991, 1997; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997). When outgroups are perceived to be unreceptive to intergroup contact, for example, individuals are less inclined to approach outgroup members and will hold negative attitudes and expectations of intergroup contact with members of that group. Conversely, if outgroup members are perceived to be interested in and enjoy intergroup contact, individuals are more likely to be encouraged to interact and expect positive interactions with the outgroup members, thereby leading to better intergroup experiences, and, in turn, more positive intergroup attitudes (e.g., R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997).

1.4.3.1 Norms in direct contact

Although it has been argued that norms are relatively understudied in direct intergroup contact research (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996; Mahonen, Jasinskaja-Lahti, & Liebkind, 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), the importance of normative support was highlighted by Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis of intergroup contact studies. In examining why intergroup contact generally reduces prejudice, Pettigrew and Tropp found that support from authority was associated with greater prejudice reduction effects, irrespective of whether any other optimal conditions were satisfied. Indeed, of all the possible mechanisms identified to influence the interplay between intergroup contact and prejudice, the authors asserted that perceived social

norms in the form of institutional and authority support “may be an especially important condition for facilitating positive contact effects” (p.766).

The importance of norms in direct intergroup contact has also been acknowledged in the developmental psychology literature (e.g., Abrams, Rutland, & L. Cameron, 2003; Ata, Bastian, & Lusher, 2009; Feddes et al., 2009). Generally focusing on the influence of specific ingroup and outgroup norms, including peer and parental approval, these studies have found that normative support and approval of intergroup contact plays a significant role in the development of positive intergroup attitudes (e.g., Ata et al., 2009; Feddes et al., 2009).

Investigating school children’s attitudes in Germany, Feddes et al. (2009) found that German children’s direct friendships with Turkish peers predicted positive outgroup attitudes after seven months. Notably, however, this association was partially mediated by the perceived approval of both German and Turkish children to engage in intergroup contact. These findings suggest that having a cross-group friendship which goes unsanctioned and is perceived to receive support from both ingroup and outgroup members, indicates the acceptability of such contact and, in turn, reinforces such behaviour and ultimately generalises to more positive intergroup attitudes.

In addition to peer norms, perceived parental norms towards intergroup contact have also been identified as an important mediator between intergroup contact and intergroup attitudes (Ata et al., 2009). Using non-Muslim Australian teenagers, Ata and colleagues (2009) reported that having a cross-group friendship with a Muslim friend was associated with wanting reduced social distance with Muslims even after controlling for important demographic and context-specific variables. Moreover, a path model assessing the utility of five distinct mediators of the relationship between intergroup contact and social distance revealed that

perceived parental support of intergroup contact with Muslims significantly mediated the association between having a cross-group friendship and desiring less social distance with Muslims. Taken together with Feddes et al.'s (2009) findings and general intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1991), these results highlight the importance for significant others (e.g., friends and family) and society in general to be supportive of intergroup contact. When such support is evident, direct intergroup contact is unhindered by normative restraints and is free to foster positive intergroup attitudes (e.g., Allport, 1954; Ata et al., 2009; Feddes et al., 2009; Pettigrew, 1991, 1997; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

1.4.3.2 Norms in extended contact

Despite receiving relatively little attention in direct intergroup contact, the role of perceived group norms is at the forefront of research investigating extended intergroup contact (e.g., Wright et al., 1997; see also L. Cameron et al., 2011; De Tezanos et al., 2010; R. N. Turner et al., 2008). Acknowledging that group memberships remain more salient in vicarious contact than direct contact, where individuating characteristics can overshadow group memberships, Wright et al. (1997) proposed that group norms would be of the utmost importance in how extended contact influenced intergroup attitudes. Indeed, in the initial introduction of the extended contact hypothesis, Wright and colleagues proposed that perceptions of ingroup norms and outgroup norms would act as significant mediators between extended contact and reduced prejudice, a proposal which has since gained significant empirical support (e.g., L. Cameron et al., 2011; De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; R. N. Turner et al., 2008).

In the first examination of the proposed mediators of the relationship between extended contact and reduced prejudice, R. N. Turner and colleagues

(2008) found significant support for Wright et al.'s (1997) hypothesis. As previously mentioned (section 1.4.2.2), intergroup anxiety was found to significantly mediate between extended contact and attitudes towards South Asian people. Importantly, both perceived ingroup norms (e.g., "How friendly do you think your White friends are to Asian people?") and outgroup norms (e.g., "In general, how friendly do you think Asian people are to White people?") also independently mediated this association. Indeed, in the two cross-sectional studies, perception of ingroup norms was the strongest mediator between White participants' extended contact with South Asians and more favourable attitudes towards the outgroup as a whole, suggesting that perceived ingroup norms play a vital role in how vicarious contact influences intergroup attitudes (e.g., Hewstone & Swart, 2011; Jetten et al., 1996; Wright et al., 1997).

Replicating R. N. Turner et al.'s (2008) research, Gomez, Tropp, and Fernandez (2011) also found that norms exert a powerful influence on the effects of extended contact. Using majority (Spaniards) and minority groups (immigrants) in Spain, the researchers examined how extended contact influenced both intergroup attitudes and intergroup expectations. Controlling for cross-group friendships and the quantity and quality of previous cross-group contact, they found that extended contact positively predicted participants' intergroup attitudes and expectancies. Furthermore, ingroup norms, outgroup norms, and intergroup anxiety were found to partially mediate both these relationships. These findings not only emphasise the important role of group norms in how extended contact influences intergroup attitudes, but also expands upon previous research and illustrates that extended contact, via ingroup and outgroup norms, also influences intergroup expectancies for both minority and majority group members.

Implementing these findings, L. Cameron et al. (2011) used developmental interventions with White schoolchildren to quasi-experimentally investigate how stories illustrating extended contact with South Asian children influenced behavioural intentions towards South Asians. Consistent with the extended contact hypothesis and previous research (Gomez et al., 2011; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997), they found that extended contact stories not only increased children's intentions of playing with South Asian children, but for older children, who are more attuned to group pressures than younger children, this association was mediated by both ingroup and outgroup norms.

Combining these investigations illustrates that observing an ingroup member who is friends with an outgroup member increases the perceived ingroup acceptability and endorsement of such behaviour which, in turn, promotes more positive attitudes, expectations, and behavioural intentions towards intergroup contact (e.g., L. Cameron et al., 2011; De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; Gomez et al., 2011; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997). Furthermore, having extended contact with a cross-group friendship also leads individuals to perceive that outgroup members approve of intergroup contact too. This perception of positive outgroup norms reduces any negative preconceptions and biases individuals may hold, promotes positive outgroup attitudes and, as such, increases the likelihood of further intergroup contact (e.g., L. Cameron et al., 2011; Gomez et al., 2011; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997). In sum, then, when individuals perceive both the ingroup and outgroup to hold positive attitudes towards intergroup contact, intergroup contact theory and the related extended contact hypothesis suggests that positive intergroup outcomes will occur (e.g., Allport, 1954; L. Cameron et al., 2011; De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; Gomez et al., 2011; Pettigrew, 1991; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997).

1.4.4 Generalisation of contact effects

A common concern for intergroup contact theorists is the extent to which the positive effects generated within direct and extended contact situations can generalise to different situations, different individuals, and different outgroups (e.g., R. Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Hewstone & R. Brown, 1986; Pettigrew, 1998, 2009; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2008; R. N. Turner et al., 2007b; Van Laar, Levin, Sinclair, & Sidanius, 2005; Wright et al., 1997). Notably, if the positive effects do not generalise beyond the initial setting, individual, or outgroup, the usefulness of such research and related interventions are severely limited. Fortunately, however, the large scale meta-analysis conducted by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) revealed that intergroup contact does indeed generalise. Specifically, in assessing the breadth of intergroup contact effects, the meta-analysis found that intergroup contact, on average, reduced prejudice towards the outgroup member within the situation ($r = -.23$). In turn, this generalised to reduced prejudice in diverse situations ($r = -.23$), reduced prejudice towards the entire outgroup ($r = -.21$), and reduced prejudice towards outgroups not specifically involved in the initial contact ($r = -.19$) (see also Pettigrew, 2009).

1.4.4.1 Typicality and group saliency

Although the exact processes by which it occurs is still a topic for discussion (see R. Brown & Hewstone, 2005 for an overview), it is thought that generalisation is most likely to occur when individuals are perceived to be typical of their group and/or group categories are salient within the contact situation (Brewer & Miller, 1988; R. Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Hewstone & R. Brown, 1986; Pettigrew, 1998; R. N. Turner et al., 2007b; Wright et al., 1997).

Illustrating the importance of perceived typicality, Wilder (1984) investigated the effects of having either positive or negative contact with students of a rival college who were perceived to be either typical or atypical of their student body. Two experiments found that evaluations of the outgroup college were improved only when the contact was positive and the outgroup student was perceived as typical of their college. Having positive contact with an outgroup student who was perceived as unrepresentative of the outgroup, or having negative contact with either typical or atypical outgroup members had no effect on outgroup evaluations compared to a control group.

In discussing the findings, Wilder (1984) suggested that negative contact with either a typical or atypical member did not influence outgroup evaluations compared to a control group because the contact corresponded with pre-existing negative expectations that served to cement their negative opinions of the outgroup. The effects of positive contact, however, were significantly influenced by the perceived typicality of the outgroup member. Specifically, when outgroup members are atypical and positive, individuals discount and subtype the positive contact as “an exception to the rule” and, as such, do not generalise the unexpected positive contact to the rest of the group. The unexpected positive intergroup contact is more likely to generalise, however, when the outgroup member is viewed as a typical representation of the outgroup and thus “predictive of others in the outgroup” (Wilder, 1984, p. 191).

In addition to illustrating the importance of perceived typicality of the outgroup member, Wilder’s (1984) experiments highlight the need for group memberships to be salient in intergroup contact. Within the experiments, for example, participants were repeatedly reminded of the college affiliations (i.e., group memberships) under investigation. Logically, if group memberships are

overlooked, interactions between group members will be considered on an interpersonal level, thereby limiting any contact effects to the individuals involved (e.g., R. Brown & J. C. Turner, 1981). In order for the contact effects to generalise, therefore, the contact needs to be viewed as a form of intergroup contact by acknowledging and emphasising the group memberships of the interaction partners (e.g., R. Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Hewstone & R. Brown, 1986).

L. Cameron and Rutland (2006) tested the efficacy of highlighting group typicality and emphasising group memberships of disabled children in extended contact interventions using non-disabled children as participants. Compared to interventions that only mentioned group memberships once (neutral condition) and interventions that emphasised the individuating characteristics of the disabled child in the story (decategorisation condition), the intergroup condition which emphasised the typicality and group memberships of the children featured in the story, was the only condition that promoted more positive attitudes towards the entire outgroup. These results illustrate that in order for attitudes to generalise from the specific contact situation, the contact must be perceived in terms of group memberships and the individuals involved should be perceived as typical representations of their groups (e.g., R. Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Hewstone & R. Brown, 1986; Wilder, 1984). When these characteristics are emphasised, positive contact with one outgroup member can generalise to positive attitudes towards different members of the outgroup and members of different outgroups in different situations (R. Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Hewstone & R. Brown, 1986; Pettigrew, 1997, 1998, 2009; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Wilder, 1984).

1.5 Summary of intergroup contact theory

From its initial proposal in 1954, Allport's contact hypothesis has generated nearly 60 years of research and over 750 studies investigating the link between intergroup contact and prejudice (Davies et al., 2011; Hewstone & Swart, 2011). Through this substantial research we now know that intergroup contact generally reduces prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2008) and that factors including perceived norms (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1991), intergroup anxiety (Stephan & Stephan, 1985), and quality of contact influence this relationship (Islam & Hewstone, 1993). The positive effects of intergroup contact, furthermore, can generalise from the individual to the outgroup and to outgroups not even involved in the interaction (Pettigrew, 1998, 2009). Such extensive research has not only advanced the hypothesis into a fully fledged theory (Hewstone & Swart, 2011), it has provided the basis for practical interventions which have reduced prejudice in real-world settings (e.g., L. Cameron & Rutland, 2006; L. Cameron et al., 2011; Paluck, 2009) and illustrated the tangible implications intergroup contact theory can have on society (e.g., Hewstone & Swart, 2011; R. N. Turner et al., 2008).

Despite the impressive nature of the research and practical implications derived from intergroup contact theory, there has been surprisingly little research conducted on a specific form of intergroup contact: the cross-group romantic relationship (see Levin, Taylor, & Caudle, 2007 for a notable exception). Indeed, although many prominent researchers have suggested that long-term intimate intergroup contact is essential to produce positive intergroup outcomes (e.g., Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969; Cook, 1962; Pettigrew, 1998; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a, 2007b), there is a relative absence of investigations into this most intimate form of intergroup contact. In the next chapter, I seek to rectify this omission by introducing

cross-group romantic relationships as a form of intergroup contact. Drawing on research from the interpersonal relationships and intergroup relations domains, I illustrate the similarities and differences between romantic intergroup contact and other forms of contact previously studied and highlight the importance of studying this form of intergroup contact.

Chapter 2

Cross-group romantic relationships

“Everywhere on earth we find a condition of separateness among groups. People mate with their own kind” (Allport, 1954, p.17).

As only 2% of marriages in England and Wales involve partners from different ethnic groups (Office for National Statistics, 2005), Allport’s (1954) statement regarding the rarity of cross-group romantic relationships is still relevant today. Indeed, dating, cohabitating, and marital research in a variety of countries indicate that individuals generally choose romantic partners who are similar to themselves on every demographic and characteristic other than gender (e.g., L. M. Brown, McNatt, & Cooper, 2003; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006, 2007; Levin et al., 2007; Miller, Olson, & Fazio, 2004; Office for National Statistics, 2005; H. Wang & Kao, 2007; H. Wang, Kao, & Joyner, 2004).

Despite the near ubiquity of same-group relationships, however, there are a growing number of individuals entering into romantic relationships with partners from different social groups (McFadden, 2001; W. Wang, 2012). Importantly, these cross-group relationships provide researchers with the opportunity to investigate a unique form of intergroup contact. Such research expands the realm of intergroup contact theory and gives an insight into many important aspects of romantic intergroup contact, including the normative approval of such contact and how this particular form of contact influences intergroup attitudes. In addition, investigating these relationships expands the interpersonal relationships field, helping to understand and alleviate the distinctive obstacles, challenges, and outcomes encountered by cross-group partners.

2.1 Romantic relationships as a form of cross-group contact

According to Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis and Pettigrew's (1998) later reformulation of the theory, intergroup contact will reduce prejudice when the individuals involved in the contact situation share equal status, cooperate to achieve common goals, have support from authority, law, or custom, and have the potential for friendship. Accordingly, some researchers have claimed that cross-group friendships are the ideal form of intergroup contact because "*only* [italics added] friendship is likely to be sustained over time and situations and characterised by high levels of intimacy, self-other overlap, self-disclosure, and empathy" (R. N. Turner et al., 2008, p.843; see also Pettigrew, 1998).

Contrary to this assertion, however, romantic relationships also typically share these prejudice reducing qualities (e.g., Hatfield & Rapson, 1996). In successful relationships, romantic partners share equal status (e.g., equity theory: Hatfield, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978), they cooperate to achieve common goals (e.g., make each other happy), are supported by law and/or custom (e.g., marriage), and share a close friendship, with partners often describing themselves as 'best friends' (e.g., Sprecher & Regan, 2002). Similar to friendships, romantic relationships also tend to have high levels of intimacy, self-other overlap, self disclosure, and empathy in a variety of different situations over an extended period of time (e.g., R. N. Turner et al., 2008). Acknowledging these qualities and characteristics, then, implies that cross-group romantic relationships are comparable to cross-group friendships as they satisfy the optimal conditions which facilitate prejudice reduction. These similarities, moreover, suggest that cross-group romantic contact may be as powerful as cross-group friendships in positively influencing intergroup attitudes.

2.2 Unique characteristics of cross-group romantic relationships

Despite sharing many similarities with cross-group friendships, cross-group romantic relationships are a unique form of intergroup contact (e.g., Miller et al., 2004; Sprecher & Regan, 2002). In general, romantic relationships tend to be more exclusive, passionate, committed, and intimate than friendships (e.g., Berscheid, 1988; Hatfield, 1988; Sprecher & Regan, 2002). Furthermore, romantic relationships may also provide the opportunity for offspring (e.g., Berscheid, 1988) and as a result are generally placed under greater scrutiny by friends, family, and society than friendships (e.g., Miller et al., 2004). Consequently, these differences raise the possibility that although cross-group romantic relationships share many similarities with cross-group friendships, there are important distinctions between cross-group friends and cross-group romantic partners which may produce different intergroup outcomes.

2.3 Norm of endogamy

Encapsulated by the phrase, “You can be friends with them, but you just can’t marry one of them” (Miller et al., 2004, p. 354), a notable distinction between cross-group friendships and cross-group romantic relationships is the acceptability, or unacceptability, of engaging in the two forms of contact. Indeed, Miller and colleagues argue that the boundary of close intergroup contact is firmly drawn at friendships. That is, whereas cross-group friendships are generally accepted by social groups and societies, cross-group romantic relationships are not and, as such, are “especially scorned” and “stand out as uniquely burdened by prejudice” (p.355).

A possible reason for the unique level of hostility towards cross-group romantic relationships is the strong pervasive norm of endogamy. Endogamy is the

practice of marrying within one's own social group and is evident in most societies (e.g., Du Toit & Quayle, 2011; Miller et al., 2004; Office for National Statistics, 2005; W. Wang, 2012). As previously highlighted, in the last census 98% of marriages in England and Wales were between partners of the same ethnic group (Office for National Statistics, 2005), whereas this figure was 92% in the US (W. Wang, 2012). Supporting the marriage data from these countries, studies conducted on less committed relationships, such as dating partners and non-married couples, also reveal significant endogamic trends in romantic choices (e.g., Herman & Campbell, 2012; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; 2007; Miller et al., 2004; H. Wang & Kao, 2007; H. Wang et al., 2004).

Using a subgroup sample from the Wave I In-Home Sample of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, for example, H. Wang and colleagues found that 12% of 10,095 adolescents in the US who had ever dated had been involved in an interracial relationship (H. Wang & Kao, 2007; H. Wang et al., 2004). Similar patterns have also emerged from research investigating adult relationships with numerous studies finding that 14% to 20% of respondents have had cross-group romantic relationships (e.g., Herman & Campbell, 2012; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; 2007; Miller et al., 2004). Such statistics illustrate that although less committed cross-group romantic relationships are more prevalent than cross-group marriages, all cross-group romantic relationships, regardless of commitment levels, are relatively rare compared to same-group relationships, thus illustrating the pervasiveness of the endogamy norm.

A possible reason for why the endogamic norm has such a powerful influence on individuals' romantic choices is because the norm serves to protect important group values and traditions (Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Surra & Milardo, 1991). By keeping within one's own social group for romantic

relationships, customs and conventions integral to that group can be passed down through the generations, helping to maintain their unique group identity (Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Surra & Milardo, 1991). Individuals who violate this norm, however, are seen to pose a significant threat to cultural identities and familial traditions because the culture and traditions of the outgroup partner's group may dilute or even replace those important ingroup characteristics (Uskul et al., 2007). Due to this threat, cross-group romantic relationships are often discouraged, disapproved of, and even discriminated against (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Du Toit & Quayle, 2011; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2007; Lewandowski & Jackson, 2001; Miller et al., 2004; H. Wang et al., 2004).

2.4 Disapproval of cross-group romantic relationships

As a “substantial norm violation” (Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004, p. 293), cross-group romantic relationships, particularly interracial and interethnic couples, encounter greater disapproval from their family, friends, and society than same-group partners (Du Toit & Quayle, 2011; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Levin et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2004; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998). Opinion polls investigating the societal approval of cross-group relationships, for example, continue to show apprehension towards these relationships (e.g., BBC, 2002; Golebiowska, 2007). Interviews conducted with 1,576 British adults revealed that only 31% of White respondents believed that Britain is tolerant of mixed race marriages (BBC, 2002). Similarly, data from the General Social Survey of 2000 in the US found that 37.3% of White respondents would oppose a close family member marrying a Black person, 21.5% would oppose a close family member marrying a Hispanic person, and 21.8% would oppose a close family member marrying an Asian person (Golebiowska, 2007).

In support of these general opinion polls, individuals who go on to form cross-group romantic relationships often report that they receive less support and approval from their social networks than partners in same-group romantic relationships (e.g., Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Levin et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2004; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; H. Wang et al., 2004). Shibazaki and Brennan (1998), for example, found that university students in interethnic relationships reported significantly greater societal disapproval towards their relationship than students involved in a same-ethnic relationship. Using a more diverse set of participants, Lehmiller and Agnew (2006) further revealed that individuals romantically involved with a partner of a different race reported significantly greater disapproval from friends, family, and society in general than individuals in same-race partnerships.

In addition to encountering disapproval and hostility towards their relationships, cross-group partners are personally subjected to negative perceptions and derogatory stereotypes. Such perceptions include that the partners have low self-esteem (Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998), are less well psychologically adjusted, are less successful (Lewandowski & Jackson, 2001), and are sexually obsessed or deviant (Lalonde, Giguere, Fontaine, & Smith, 2007). Their relationships, furthermore, are deemed to be less compatible (Lewandowski & Jackson, 2001), less satisfying (Gurung & Duong, 1999), and are socially devalued compared to same-group couples (Du Toit & Quayle, 2011; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2007). Such negative perceptions of cross-group partners and relationships combined with the explicit disapproval towards them is believed to have significant consequences for the individuals involved and the satisfaction and longevity of the relationships (e.g., Gurung & Duong, 1999; H. Wang et al., 2004). Moreover, there are also significant intergroup consequences of such intergroup contact that require further investigation

(e.g., Du Toit & Quayle, 2011; Levin et al., 2007; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; Uskul et al., 2007).

2.4.1 Interpersonal consequences of disapproval

The evident disapproval of cross-group romantic relationships has been found to significantly impact the initiation, development, and endurance of such relationships (e.g., L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; H. Wang et al., 2004). Clark-Ibanez and Felmlee (2004), for example, investigated how easy or difficult it was for university students to date a person of another ethnicity. Open-ended responses revealed that the most common reason not to date outgroup members was perceived social pressure not to enter into cross-group romantic relationships. Similarly, L. M. Brown and colleagues (2003) examined the romantic preferences of Jewish and non-Jewish White students and found that participants from both ethnic groups perceived that they would encounter significantly greater disapproval for dating an outgroup member than for dating an ingroup member. This perceived disapproval, furthermore, significantly predicted participants' preference for ingroup members over outgroup members as romantic partners in two independent studies. These investigations suggest that the perceived disapproval of cross-group romantic relationships plays a significant role in deterring individuals from entering into relationships with outgroup members.

The disapproval of cross-group romantic relationships not only acts as a deterrent for the initiation of cross-group relationships, the discouragement and hostility cross-group couples' encounter can continue to have significant detrimental effects on the quality and persistence of their relationships (Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Etcheverry, Le, & Charania, 2008; Sprecher & Felmlee, 2000). According to interpersonal relationships research, for example, lacking support from friends,

family, and society is associated with a range of negative interpersonal outcomes, including keeping the relationship a secret (e.g., Felmlee, 2001; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2007; H. Wang et al., 2004), having a lower quality relationship (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2007), receiving less support and reassurance in times of hardships (Etcheverry & Agnew, 2004; Felmlee, 2001; Sprecher & Felmlee, 2000), and having a higher rate of relationship dissolution (e.g., Sprecher & Felmlee, 2000; H. Wang et al., 2004). Consequently, this research suggests that the disapproval cross-group couples' encounter will have a negative impact on their relationship, making it less satisfying and more likely to dissolve than same-group relationships.

In support of this assertion, H. Wang and colleagues (2004) found that adolescents in interracial relationships were more likely to terminate their relationship than teens involved in same-race relationships, even after controlling for demographic (e.g., age), individual (e.g., self-esteem), relationship (e.g., relationship commitment), and social network factors (e.g., perceived approval of the relationship). They also found that interracial partners were more likely to keep their relationships to themselves, were less likely to meet their partners' parents, and were less likely to show public displays of affection (e.g., hold hands in public). In discussing the results, the authors suggest that because interracial relationships are not well accepted by society, interracial daters encounter greater stresses on their relationships which, in turn, leads to the greater termination rates reported in the large scale study.

Despite being consistent with well founded interpersonal processes, other studies investigating cross-group romantic relationships have revealed that although cross-group couples encounter greater prejudice towards their relationships than same-group couples, the relationships somewhat surprisingly do not differ in relationship quality, stability, or longevity (Gurung & Duong, 1999; Lehmiller &

Agnew, 2006; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998). Notably, Lehmiller and Agnew (2006) investigated non-traditional relationships (i.e., interracial, age-gap, and homosexual relationships) and found that, as expected, interracial partners' perceived greater disapproval towards their relationship than partners in traditional relationships (i.e., heterosexual, non age-gap, same-race relationships). Nevertheless, despite perceiving greater disapproval, there were no significant detrimental impacts on the satisfaction, investment, commitment or perceived alternatives of the cross-group partners. Shibazaki and Brennan (1998) and Gurung and Duong (1999) have found similar results.

Possible explanations for the finding that cross-group partners perceive greater disapproval than same-group partners, yet do not differ in their satisfaction ratings are the 'Romeo and Juliet' phenomenon (Driscoll, Davis, & Lipetz, 1972) and the 'Compensation hypothesis' (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006). According to the Romeo and Juliet hypothesis, individuals who go against the wishes of significant others to pursue a cross-group romantic relationship in the first place, may not value what others think about the relationships once it has formed. This may consequently help the partners to dismiss others' disapproval and not let societal and group objections impact upon their relationship. In addition, resistance to social pressure may unite the partners further, helping to strengthen the bond between them, making their relationship even more committed and stable (Driscoll et al., 1972).

An alternative explanation for why disapproval does not seem to impact upon the quality of cross-group romantic relationships is that cross-group partners compensate for their marginalised status (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006). Supported by research examining cross-group romantic relationships and abusive relationships (e.g., Rusbult & Martz, 1995), this interpersonal principle suggests that when relationships are not ideal in one aspect, romantic partners compensate by increasing

the quality and importance of another aspect. Cross-group partners, for example, may compensate for the lack of support they receive by perceiving their relationships to be more satisfying and investing more into those relationships (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006). By employing such a strategy, romantic partners increase their commitment to one another, helping to safeguard their relationships from the detrimental effects of disapproval (e.g., Rusbult, 1980).

2.4.2 Intergroup consequences of disapproval

Despite the encouraging finding that disapproval towards cross-group romantic relationships may not impact upon the quality of the relationships, the evident disapproval towards these interpersonal relationships may have an alternative consequence for the partners involved. Specifically, as cross-group romantic relationships defy important group norms and customs of endogamy, this form of intergroup contact may not satisfy the important optimal condition of having support from authority, law, or custom (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Without such approval, this form of intergroup contact may not have the same prejudice reducing qualities as found with other forms of intergroup contact, including cross-group friendships. Indeed, because endogamy is such an important and pervasive group norm and disapproval of these relationships is extremely evident (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Levin et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2004; H. Wang et al., 2004), such negative reactions towards the relationships may, theoretically, negate some of the positive attitudes that might otherwise have been derived from this form of intergroup contact.

Illustrating this possibility, Wilner, Walkley and Cook (1955) investigated interracial housing and noted that “Contact and perceived social climate tend to reinforce each other when their influence operates in the same direction, and to

cancel each other out when their influence works in the opposite direction” (p.106). Relating this supposition to cross-group romantic relationships, it is conceivable that the social climate, in which the partners’ networks disapprove of the romantic relationship, cancels out the positive intergroup consequences of sharing a romantic relationship with an outgroup member. In sum, consistent with intergroup contact theory, being in a cross-group romantic relationship may predict positive intergroup attitudes, however, the disapproval of the relationship from others may simultaneously nullify these positive outcomes.

2.4.2.1 Intergroup outcomes for cross-group partners

Although relatively little attention has been paid to the intergroup consequences of forming a romantic relationship with an outgroup member, there have been a few attempts to examine how such contact influences intergroup attitudes (e.g., Du Toit & Quayle, 2011; Levin et al., 2007; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; Uskul et al., 2007). Shibazaki and Brennan (1998), for example, compared intra-ethnic and interethnic dating couples and found that despite perceiving greater disapproval towards their relationships from the general public, cross-group partners were more willing to engage in various relationships (e.g., roommate, romantic partner, spouse) with outgroup members than were same-group partners. The authors, therefore, concluded that cross-group dating reduced prejudice.

Examining the research more closely, however, leads to a different interpretation. As a proxy for prejudice measurement, participants were asked to indicate ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to whether they were willing to have an outgroup member as a roommate, good friend, romantic partner, live-in partner, spouse, and parent of their child. Results showed that cross-group partners were significantly more willing to have the majority of these relationships than same-group partners. Notably,

however, there was no difference between cross-group and same-group partners' willingness to have an outgroup friend. Moreover, as there were no other items concerning participants' willingness to have other, less intimate forms of intergroup contact (e.g., neighbours, colleagues, classmates), nor were there any affective and cognitive indicators of prejudice, Shibazaki and Brennan's (1998) assertion that cross-group dating reduces prejudice is somewhat unconvincing, especially considering that both types of partners were very willing to have an outgroup friend.

A further study investigating the association between cross-group dating and intergroup attitudes also illustrates that romantic cross-group contact may not necessarily lead to positive intergroup attitudes. Investigating the role of cultural norms on attitudes towards cross-group dating, Uskul et al. (2007) found that Chinese-Canadians who experienced cross-group dating were more personally open to cross-group dating and held more positive attitudes towards other ingroup members dating outgroup members. Nevertheless, no such association was found for the majority ethnic group. For European-Canadians, having a romantic relationship with an outgroup member was uncorrelated with their general attitudes towards cross-group dating or with their personal openness towards cross-group dating. Although the authors did not study any other intergroup attitudes and the Chinese-Canadian cross-group partners did exhibit more positive attitudes towards cross-group dating, the null finding for the European-Canadians lends some support to the possibility that cross-group dating may not be strongly associated with intergroup attitudes, especially for majority group members.

The most notable and direct study of the effects of cross-group dating on intergroup attitudes also found conflicting outcomes (Levin et al., 2007). In a four year longitudinal study of college students, Levin et al. (2007) investigated the intergroup predictors and outcomes of cross-group dating. They found that cross-

group dating in college was predicted by more outgroup friends, less ingroup bias and less intergroup anxiety at the start of college. Moreover, controlling for pre-college attitudes, students who had a cross-group romantic relationship during college reported even less ingroup bias and less intergroup anxiety at the end of college. This suggests that the experience of cross-group dating improves the already positive intergroup attitudes of cross-group partners.

Analysing the findings further, however, reveals significant caveats to the research which bring into question the general conclusion that cross-group dating leads to positive intergroup attitudes. First, some of the positive outcomes of cross-group dating were dependent upon group membership. Namely, White students who had dated an outgroup member did not exhibit the reduced intergroup anxiety that Asian-American and Latino students reported. Second, although cross-group dating during college did predict some positive intergroup consequences, cross-group dating also predicted greater perceived ingroup pressure not to date or socialise with outgroup members. Although this pressure does not seem to influence the partners' intergroup attitudes, Levin et al. (2007) suggest that the perceived pressure not to date or socialise with outgroup members may have long-term negative intergroup consequences. Specifically, once out of the partially-enclosed, extremely multi-ethnic, liberal environment of college, Levin et al. argue that this ingroup pressure to refrain from intimate intergroup contact may increase and may also subsequently inhibit the establishment and perseverance of cross-group relationships after college.

In sum, previous research investigating the association between direct cross-group romantic contact and prejudice is limited. The conclusions from these studies, moreover, do not provide compelling evidence that being in a cross-group romantic relationship improves intergroup attitudes. In fact, the only consistent finding across

these studies is that cross-group partners encounter greater disapproval towards their relationships than same-group partners.

2.4.2.2 Intergroup outcomes of extended contact with cross-group relationships

Despite the negative consequences for cross-group partners, their relationships may help to improve the intergroup attitudes of others. According to extended contact theory, knowing an ingroup member sharing a positive romantic relationship with an outgroup member may promote positive expectations of such contact and therefore improve intergroup attitudes (Wright et al., 1997). Although no research to my knowledge has investigated the consequences of knowing a cross-group romantic relationship, a recent study examining extended contact with multiracial families may provide some important insights into how this form of extended contact influences intergroup attitudes (Du Toit & Quayle, 2011).

Examining multiracial families in post-apartheid South Africa, Du Toit and Quayle (2011) found that individuals who personally know a multiracial family reported less blatant prejudice, perceived less outgroup threat, and were more agreeable to rectifying race-based injustices than people without such contact. Furthermore, the reduction in blatant prejudice was still significant even after controlling for other forms of contact, including acquaintances and friendships. These findings illustrate that extended contact with cross-group families, including cross-group partners and cross-group adoptions, helps to promote positive attitudes as suggested by extended contact theory (e.g., Wright et al., 1997).

Nevertheless, although the findings from the South African research are encouraging, there are a few caveats that need to be addressed. Firstly, the research concentrated on multiracial families. In doing so, the authors did not distinguish between knowing cross-group adoptions or cross-group partners, nor did they

include less committed cross-group romantic partners, including cross-group dating partners. Furthermore, the sample size was small ($n = 64$) and unrepresentative of all South Africans (Du Toit & Quayle, 2011, p. 546). Moreover, as the study was exploratory, it did not attempt to investigate why extended contact reduced prejudice. Mediators such as perceived social norms and intergroup anxiety, for example, were not measured. Lastly, the study was conducted in South Africa, a country with a recent past of legally sanctioned racism, which may limit its generalisability.

Despite these limitations, however, applying this research to extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships suggests that extended romantic contact may promote positive intergroup attitudes. Furthermore, combining these extended contact findings with research investigating cross-group partners suggests that although cross-group romantic contact may not necessarily promote positive intergroup attitudes for the partners involved in the relationships, the relationships, via extended contact, may help to promote positive intergroup outcomes for others.

2.5 Summary of cross-group romantic relationships

Romantic relationships between members of distinct social groups represent a unique form of intergroup contact which appears to fulfil the optimal conditions for reducing prejudice (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). These relationships, however, also violate the powerful, pervasive norm of endogamy, threaten group identities and traditions, and, as such, encounter widespread disapproval and discrimination (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Levin et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2004; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; H. Wang et al., 2004). This disapproval can place an immense strain on the partners within the

relationships (e.g., H. Wang et al., 2004) and can severely hamper the prejudice reducing qualities of having such intergroup contact (e.g., Levin et al., 2007).

Despite these notable intergroup and interpersonal outcomes, however, cross-group romantic relationships remain relatively understudied as a form of intergroup contact. Given that this form of intergroup contact is not only unique but is constantly on the rise (McFadden, 2001; W. Wang, 2012), further research is urgently needed to explore how these relationships impact upon intergroup attitudes and relations, and to examine how partners in these relationships overcome significant disapproval to develop healthy, satisfying interpersonal relationships.

2.6 Aims of the thesis

In this thesis, I attempt to examine these issues and investigate the intergroup attitudes and interpersonal perceptions associated with cross-group romantic relationships. Table 2.1 lists these objectives together with the studies designed to investigate these aims.

In order to illustrate the pervasiveness of endogamy and highlight the rarity of cross-group romantic relationships, in Chapter 3 I examine the romantic preferences of White undergraduates in Britain. Having established that cross-group relationships are relatively rare, Chapter 4 examines how direct cross-group romantic contact predicts intergroup and interpersonal attitudes. In this examination, I compare the perceived approval and relationship qualities of same-group and cross-group partners. Furthermore, adding significantly to Levin et al.'s (2007) previous examination, I examine how having a romantic relationship with an outgroup member predicts intergroup attitudes. Specifically, using participants from a different country in a less ethnically diverse culture than Levin et al., and focusing solely on a majority ethnic group, I explore whether having a cross-group romantic

relationship is associated with positive intergroup attitudes. Further improving on Levin et al.'s design, I also analyse how having a cross-group friendship is associated with intergroup attitudes to explicitly assess if cross-group romantic relationships are similar to cross-group friendships.

Acknowledging that the large majority of individuals do not enter into cross-group romantic relationships, Chapter 5 investigates how extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship is associated with intergroup attitudes. In this cross-sectional study, I examine the approval and perceptions of cross-group relationships, in addition to investigating how knowing an ingroup member in a cross-group romantic relationship predicts individuals' intergroup attitudes and personal openness to cross-group relationships. Building upon the findings of the cross-sectional studies, Chapters 6 and 7 detail two experiments designed to examine how the quality and the perceived norms of approval of cross-group romantic relationships influence the interpersonal and intergroup consequences of having extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship.

Through these cross-sectional studies and experiments, I make significant contributions to both the intergroup relations and interpersonal relationships fields. Notably, I expand intergroup contact theory to investigate an increasingly important, yet often neglected form of intergroup contact. I also add to the interpersonal relationships literature by exploring both the predictors and outcomes of cross-group romantic relationships in Britain. Such research, furthermore, has real implications for individuals' romantic relationships and for prejudice reduction strategies in society as a whole, and will hopefully spur on more researchers to investigate this important form of intergroup contact.

Table 2.1. Studies addressing the objectives of the Ph.D.

| Objective | Studies addressing objective |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Evaluate the interpersonal qualities of cross-group romantic relationships | Studies 2, 3, and 4 |
| Examine the norms of approval towards cross-group romantic relationships | Studies 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 |
| Investigate how norms towards cross-group romantic relationships can be improved | Studies 2 and 3 |
| Investigate the predictors and likelihood of having cross-group romantic relationships | Studies 1, 3, 4, and 5 |
| Assess the outgroup attitudes associated with having a cross-group romantic relationship | Study 2 |
| Assess the outgroup attitudes associated with having extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship | Studies 3, 4, and 5 |
| Examine how the quality of cross-group romantic relationships influence outgroup attitudes | Study 4 |
| Examine how norms towards cross-group romantic relationships influence outgroup attitudes | Study 5 |

Chapter 3

Romantic group preferences

From dating partners to spouses, individuals typically choose fellow ingroup members as romantic partners (Allport, 1954; L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; 2007; Miller et al., 2004; Office for National Statistics, 2005; H. Wang & Kao, 2007; H. Wang et al., 2004). As emphasised in the previous chapter, this endogamic norm is both extremely pervasive in its near ubiquity (e.g., Office for National Statistics, 2005; W. Wang, 2012) and extremely influential in encouraging same-group relationships while deterring individuals from cross-group relationships (e.g., L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004). Nevertheless, there are individuals who manage to withstand this powerful norm and forge cross-group romantic relationships with partners from ethnic groups different to their own (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Levin et al., 2007; Office for National Statistics, 2005; W. Wang, 2012). Interestingly, the composition of these cross-group romantic relationships also reveals significant ethnic group preferences (e.g., Levin et al., 2007; Office for National Statistics, 2005; W. Wang, 2012). Indeed, although ingroup members are generally more preferred and are more common romantic partners than outgroup members, partners from certain outgroups are also seemingly more desired than partners from other outgroups.

In this Study, I expand on previous research conducted in other countries, such as Canada and the US, to examine romantic preferences for ethnic groups in Britain. Specifically, I examine participants' reported likelihood to enter into three types of romantic relationships (dating, long-term relationship, and having children)

with members of three different ethnic groups (Black, South Asian, and White). In addition, as past research has proposed a multitude of explanations for romantic preferences, I utilise interpersonal theories of attraction together with the basic tenets of intergroup contact theory to explore what factors are important in predicting how likely an individual is to enter into a relationship with members of these different groups.

3.1 Evidence of romantic preferences

Census data and research investigating interpersonal relationships consistently illustrate that individuals overwhelmingly choose partners from the same ethnic group as themselves (see section 2.3 for a more detailed discussion). Nevertheless, the same data also illustrates that when individuals choose an outgroup romantic partner, members of certain outgroups are preferred to others. The last reported census data in England and Wales, for example, show that 98% of marriages were between members of the same ethnic group (Office for National Statistics, 2005). Importantly, these census figures also show that within the 2% of cross-group marriages, certain ethnic-group compositions are more common than others. White people, for example, had married more Black Caribbean people (26,800) than Indian people (24,500), and married more Black-African people (12,900) than Pakistani people (8,400).

This preference for romantic partners from certain ethnic groups over others is also present in the US (e.g., H. Wang et al., 2004; W. Wang, 2012). In 2010, for example, 85% of newlyweds in the US were categorised as being between partners of the same ethnic group (W. Wang, 2012). Within the relatively small number of cross-group marriages in that year, moreover, further group preferences were also evident. White people, for example, married more Hispanic partners (43% of all

cross-group marriages in 2010), than East-Asian partners (14% of cross-group marriages), or Black partners (12% of cross-group marriages; W. Wang, 2012). Similar patterns of preferences have also emerged in adolescent dating histories, for example, H. Wang et al. (2004) found that White adolescents were more likely to have dated Hispanic partners than East-Asian partners, and were least likely to have dated Black partners.

Taken together, the majority of data from censuses, household, and cross-sectional studies indicate there are tangible ethnic group preferences in individuals' romantic choices. Specifically, there is a strong and extensive preference for ingroup members over outgroup members, however, when individuals do choose an outgroup romantic partner, partnerships and marriages between certain group members are more common than other ethnic group compositions (e.g., Office for National Statistics, 2005; H. Wang et al., 2004; W. Wang, 2012).

3.2 Predictors of cross-group relationships

Both interpersonal and intergroup theorists have proposed a wide-range of predictors to account for the significant group preferences exhibited in romantic choices. From demographic variables such as age and gender (e.g., Golebiowska, 2007; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Johnson & Jacobson, 2005), to the amount of contact an individual has with a group (e.g., Johnson & Jacobson, 2005; Levin et al., 2007), these theorists have suggested numerous plausible predictors to explain these group preferences. In this section, I highlight these key variables and discuss how they are thought to predict individuals' likelihood of entering into romantic relationships, especially romantic relationships with outgroup members.

3.2.1 General characteristics

3.2.1.1 Age

Age has consistently been proposed as an important predictor of the approval and formation of cross-group romantic relationships (e.g., Golebiowska, 2007; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Johnson & Jacobson, 2005; Uskul, Lalonde, & Konanur, 2011; H. Wang & Kao, 2007). Research and opinion polls report that younger adults hold significantly more positive attitudes towards cross-group romantic relationships and would be more willing to enter into a relationship with an outgroup member than people from older generations (e.g., Golebiowska, 2007; Johnson & Jacobson, 2005; Uskul et al., 2011).

3.2.1.2 Gender

Gender is a more complicated predictor of relationship formation and attitudes. Numerous researchers have proposed that men are more likely to enter into and approve of cross-group romantic relationships than women (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Golebiowska, 2007; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Johnson & Jacobson, 2005; Miller et al., 2004). While some have found support for this hypothesis (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Golebiowska, 2007), others have found the inverse: that women are more likely than men to approve of and enter into cross-group relationships (e.g., Levin et al., 2007; Uskul et al., 2011).

3.2.1.3 Ethnicity

Ethnicity has also been proposed as a predictor of cross-group relationships but research has found mixed, and often contradictory, support for its influence (e.g., L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Lalonde et al., 2007; Lee & Gudykunst, 2001; Levin et al., 2007; Uskul et al., 2011). Census data, for

example, estimates that minority ethnic group members marry outgroup members to a greater extent than majority ethnic group members in both the UK and the US (Office for National Statistics, 2005; W. Wang, 2012). Social psychological research, however, finds that it is majority group members who are more likely than minority group members to have been in a cross-group romantic relationship and are more likely to hold more positive attitudes towards such relationships (e.g., L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Uskul et al., 2011).

3.2.1.4 Interaction of gender and ethnicity

A possible explanation for the indistinct effects of gender and ethnicity on the likelihood of entering into a cross-group relationship might be that the variables interact with one another. Black and White males, for example, are reportedly more likely to be in and approve of cross-group romantic relationship than Black and White females (e.g., Herman & Campbell, 2012; Miller et al., 2004; Office for National Statistics, 2005; W. Wang, 2012). Chinese women, in contrast, are more likely to endorse and be in cross-group relationships than Chinese men (e.g., Office for National Statistics, 2005; Uskul et al., 2007; W. Wang, 2012). These inconsistent gender patterns across ethnic groups suggest that gender and ethnicity may interact with one another to predict the likelihood of entering into a cross-group relationship.

3.2.1.5 Religious and political beliefs

In addition to general demographic characteristics, personal beliefs such as religious beliefs and political ideology have been purported to influence the likelihood of entering into a cross-group romantic relationship (e.g., Eastwick, Richeson, Son, & Finkel, 2009; Golebiowska, 2007; Johnson & Jacobson, 2005). Individuals who are less religious and individuals who are more politically liberal have been found to approve of cross-group relationships to a greater extent than

religious individuals and conservative individuals (e.g., Golebiowska, 2007; Johnson & Jacobson, 2005). An investigation into the influence of political orientation on actual dating behaviour, for example, revealed that political liberalism was related to attitudes in a speed-dating context (Eastwick et al., 2009). Specifically, Eastwick and colleagues found that liberal White participants were more likely than conservative White participants to desire and be attracted to a Black partner in a speed dating experiment.

3.2.1.6 Romantic beliefs

Another relatively understudied personal belief that may play an important role in predicting cross-group romantic relationship formation is the extent to which individuals believe in romance. Romantic beliefs, including ‘love at first sight’, ‘only one true love’, ‘true love forever’, and ‘intrepid lovers can overcome any obstacles’, have been identified as important predictors of romantic relationships in general (Sprecher & Metts, 1989; 1999). These romantic beliefs are thought to influence individuals’ expectations, initiation, and development of romantic relationships (e.g., Knee, 1998; Sprecher & Metts, 1989; 1999; Weaver & Ganong, 2004) and, as such, may also have the potential to influence the likelihood of individuals initiating relationships with cross-group partners as well.

3.2.2 Contact with groups

As a form of intergroup contact, the likelihood of entering into a romantic relationship with an outgroup member may be predicted by the same principles that predict other forms of intergroup contact, including cross-group friendships (Johnson & Jacobson, 2005).

3.2.2.1 Opportunity for contact

One such principle is the amount of opportunity individuals have to engage in contact with an outgroup member (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Felmlee, 2001; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Johnson & Jacobson, 2005; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; Wang & Kao, 2007). Logically, individuals generally need to be in physical proximity to a partner, or have access which allows them to communicate with them, in order to initiate a romantic relationship (propinquity: Bossard, 1932). Indeed, research examining this assertion reveals that individuals who have greater opportunity to meet individuals from different groups – because they live in more diverse areas (Golebiowska, 2007; Herman & Campbell, 2012), attend a multiethnic school or university (H. Wang & Kao, 2007), and/or have varied social networks – are more likely to endorse and are more likely to have personally had a cross-group romantic relationship (Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004).

Nevertheless, opportunity for contact cannot solely account for the likelihood of entering into a cross-group romantic relationship (e.g., Aboud, Mendelson, & Purdy, 2003; Levin et al., 2007). Levin and colleagues (2007), for example, found that availability of partners at university (as indicated by the percentage of student body from particular ethnic groups) did not influence dating patterns of students. Specifically, although there were more Asian-American students (36%) than Latino students (18%), White and African American students dated members of the two groups at comparable rates.

Census data also reveals that the presence of ethnic group members is not solely responsible for the formation of cross-group relationships. In the UK, for example, there are far more Indian (1,053,411) and Pakistani people (747,285) than Black Caribbean (565,876) and Black African people (485,277), yet interethnic marriage rates show that South Asian people are the minority group least likely to

enter into cross-group relationships (Office for National Statistics, 2005). Similarly, in the US, Whites married more East Asian partners than Black partners in 2010, yet East Asians account for 5% of the population compared to Blacks who account for 12% of the population (W. Wang, 2012).

3.2.2.2 Positive experiences

Opportunity for contact, then, may be better conceptualised as being an important predictor of cross-group romantic relationships to the extent that it leads to actual contact, and specifically, the extent that it leads to positive intergroup experiences and the development of cross-group friendships (e.g., Du Bois & Hirsch, 1990; Johnson & Jacobson, 2005; Molina, Wittig, & Giang, 2004; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a). R. N. Turner and colleagues (2007a, studies 2 and 3), for example, found that opportunity for intergroup contact is associated with greater numbers of cross-group friendships. Cross-group friendships, moreover, have been found to positively predict interethnic dating behaviour (Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Levin et al., 2007). Importantly, however, it is not just the quantity of cross-group friendships that may predict the likelihood of having a cross-group romantic relationship. The amount of time spent with outgroup friends is also likely to be important as it implies that individuals have quality interactions with outgroup members that could facilitate meaningful relationships that may subsequently develop into romantic relationships (e.g., Reis & Shaver, 1988; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a).

3.2.2.3 Extended contact

Direct forms of intergroup contact, such as cross-group friendships, may not be the only forms of intergroup contact that predict individuals' likelihood of entering into cross-group romantic relationships. Vicarious experiences of

intergroup contact, including knowing an ingroup member who shares a friendship or even a romantic relationship with an outgroup member, could also predict the likelihood of entering into cross-group romantic relationships (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Felmlee, 2001). Notably, these forms of extended contact illustrate that close intergroup contact can be positive and rewarding. Moreover, if there are no sanctions or disapproval from other group members, extended contact also illustrates the acceptability of such relationships (e.g., R. N. Turner et al., 2007b; Wright et al., 1997). Furthermore, as romantic partners are often introduced to one another by members of their social networks (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Felmlee, 2001), the ethnic diversity of an individual's social network, including friends of friends and romantic partners of friends, increases the likelihood of entering into cross-group romantic relationships. This is because it not only shows the acceptability of such contact, it also increases the chances of having such contact (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Lee & Gudykunst, 2001; Levin et al., 2007).

3.2.3 Attitudes towards groups

The feelings, perceptions, and attitudes individuals have towards groups are also proposed to be significantly related to how likely they are to enter into a romantic relationship with a group member.

3.2.3.1 Perceived group norms

As demonstrated in Chapters 1 and 2, perceived group norms are highly influential in both intergroup relations and interpersonal relationships (e.g., Allport, 1954; L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Felmlee, 2001; Pettigrew, 1991; R. N. Turner, et al., 2008; Uskul et al., 2007; Wright et al., 1997). The perceived approval of others indicates the acceptability of both intergroup contact and interpersonal relationships and, as such, facilitates (or hinders) the

initiation and development of both intergroup and interpersonal contact (e.g., L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Felmlee, 2001; Pettigrew, 1991; R. N. Turner, et al., 2008; Uskul et al., 2007; Wright et al., 1997). Combining this research suggests that the perceptions of ingroup and outgroup norms are especially important in predicting the likelihood of entering into a cross-group romantic relationship. Indeed, previous research has illustrated that when group norms endorse cross-group romantic relationships, individuals are more likely to enter into such relationships. Conversely, when group norms illustrate group-based apprehension or even hostility towards cross-group romantic contact, individuals are less likely to enter into romantic relationships with an outgroup member (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Harris & Kalbfleisch, 2000; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Miller et al., 2004).

3.2.3.2 Group similarity

Another perception which may be associated with an individual's likelihood of initiating a romantic relationship with an outgroup member is perceived group similarity (R. Brown & Abrams, 1986; L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Chen & Kenrick, 2002; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Lee & Gudykunst, 2001). According to the similarity-attraction hypothesis (Byrne, 1971), and evidenced by the composition of the vast majority of romantic relationships, individuals like and are attracted to others who are perceived to be similar to themselves (e.g., L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Hatfield & Rapson, 1996; Office for National Statistics, 2005). Indeed, it seems that "we like those who are like us" (Chen & Kenrick, 2002, p. 111).

As ethnicity is often used as a proxy for attitudes and personal characteristics, individuals who share an ethnic group membership are generally

presumed to be more similar in their attitudes and characteristics and are therefore perceived to be more attractive than outgroup members (e.g., L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Miller et al., 2004). Conversely, perceived dissimilarity can also impede the formation of cross-group romantic relationships. Specifically, if different ethnic groups are perceived to hold different cultural customs and expectations of romantic relationships, cross-group relationships have the potential for cultural clashes which can deter individuals from entering them (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Uskul et al., 2011). The perceived similarity or dissimilarity between the individual and the group, then, may play an important role in how likely an individual is to enter into a relationship with a member of that group.

3.2.3.3 Perceptions of threat

Related to the concerns of cultural dissimilarity, perceptions of group based threat can also predict the likelihood of entering into a cross-group romantic relationship (e.g., Brewer, 1979; 1999; Lalonde et al., 2007; Uskul et al., 2007). Different cultural customs, for example, not only lead to potential cultural clashes within relationships, these differences may also be perceived to threaten to dilute or even replace important ingroup traditions, values, and customs (e.g., Uskul et al., 2007). To safeguard the ingroup from these threats, romantic relationships with ingroup members are strongly encouraged, leading to greater ingroup attraction and the rejection of outgroup members as potential romantic partners (e.g., Brewer, 1979; 1999). Thus, if individuals perceive groups to pose a threat towards their ingroup or way of life, they will be less likely to enter into a relationship with a member of that group.

3.2.3.4 Intergroup anxiety

Another variable which is proposed to be negatively associated with the likelihood of having a cross-group romantic relationship is intergroup anxiety (e.g., Levin et al., 2007; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). In both interpersonal and intergroup research, feelings of anxiety have been found to limit and impede personal communications, resulting in stifled, unrewarding, and distant interactions (e.g., Shelton, Trail, West, & Bergsieker, 2010; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Furthermore, in terms of cross-group romantic relationships, longitudinal research has also illustrated that anxiety significantly influences cross-group dating behaviour (Levin et al., 2007). Specifically, using White, Asian-American, and Latino students in California, Levin and colleagues (2007) found that intergroup anxiety before college was a significant negative predictor of intergroup dating during college for members of all three ethnic groups. These findings suggest that the anxiety an individual feels towards the group as a whole may be related to their likelihood to enter into a relationship with a member of that group.

3.2.3.5 Familiarity

According to intergroup theorists, a possible solution to reduce intergroup anxiety is to increase familiarity with outgroups (e.g., Allport, 1954). Familiarity, it is argued, helps an individual to know and understand an outgroup, enabling them to better predict outgroup members' behaviour, thereby reducing anxiety about intergroup interactions (e.g., Allport, 1954; Brewer, 1999; R. N. Turner et al., 2007b). Importantly for this research, this familiarity can also promote attraction to outgroup members (e.g., Allport, 1954; Moreland & Zajonc, 1982). Specifically, although unfamiliarity and unpredictability in relationships can be attractive and energising, individuals generally prefer relatively predictable and familiar romantic

partners who they understand and feel secure with (e.g., Love Schemas: Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Combining these interpersonal and intergroup concepts suggests that familiarity with a group should reduce uncertainty and increase perceptions of predictability of potential group partners, leading to a greater likelihood of entering into a romantic relationship with those group members. Nevertheless, as the well-known idiom states “familiarity breeds contempt”, familiarity by itself may not ensure attraction (Norton, Frost, & Ariely, 2007).

3.2.4 General group attitudes

In addition to the perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and level of contact individuals have with specific groups, individuals’ general outlook and opinions towards all groups can also predict how likely they are to enter into a cross-group romantic relationship.

3.2.4.1 Other-group orientation

Other-group orientation is a general group measure indicating how willing and interested individuals are in intergroup contact (Phinney, 1992). It has been shown to be associated with positive intergroup attitudes and is related to a greater willingness to form intimate relationships, such as friendships, with outgroup members (e.g., Molina et al., 2004). Importantly, being orientated to other groups is also associated with more positive attitudes and openness towards cross-group romantic relationships (e.g., Uskul et al., 2007; 2011). Uskul and colleagues, for example, examined Chinese-Canadians’ attitudes towards interracial dating and found that younger Chinese-Canadians’ endorsement of a mainstream Canadian identity was positively related to being more open and more approving of others’ interracial dating. The authors, furthermore, argued that the endorsement of the mainstream Canadian identity represented a greater outgroup focus which facilitated

greater interpersonal openness to members of other cultures and ethnic groups. Consequently, these studies suggest that having an other-group orientation will positively predict an individuals' likelihood of entering into a cross-group romantic relationship.

3.2.4.2 Ingroup identity

In contrast to having an other-group orientation, a great deal of research has illustrated that individuals who have strong ties and identify strongly with their own ingroup are less likely to enter into cross-group romantic relationships (e.g., L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Lee & Gudykunst, 2001; Levin et al., 2007; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; Uskul et al., 2011). In exploring Jewish ingroup romantic preferences, for example, L. M. Brown et al. (2003, Study 1) found that Jewish individuals' identification with the Jewish culture was the strongest predictor of ingroup preferences. In addition, ingroup ties have also been found to be a significant negative predictor of cross-group relationships (Levin et al., 2007). In their longitudinal study, Levin et al. (2007) found that having more friends in the ingroup (i.e., having more ingroup ties) before college predicted significantly less involvement in cross-group romantic relationships during college. In sum, having a strong ingroup identity accompanied with strong ties to the ingroup is expected to negatively predict the likelihood of entering a cross-group relationship.

3.2.4.3 Social dominance orientation

Social dominance orientation (SDO), which indicates individuals' belief in social hierarchies and desire for their ingroup to dominate outgroups (e.g., Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994), is another general group-based belief which has been found to be associated with individuals' attitudes and openness towards cross-group dating and marriages (e.g., Fang, Sidanius, & Pratto, 1998; Lalonde et

al., 2007). Notably, as cross-group romantic relationships threaten current social group hierarchies by intimately connecting and blurring social groups, individuals from dominant social groups who want to preserve their group status are likely to show the greatest opposition to these relationships. Indeed, research conducted in both the US and Canada has found that for individuals from high-status ethnic groups (i.e., White individuals) SDO is negatively correlated with personal openness and approval of others' cross-group romantic relationships (Fang et al., 1998; Lalonde et al., 2007). Drawing upon these studies, then, suggests that the SDO of White majority group members in Britain will also negatively predict the likelihood of entering into a cross-group romantic relationship.

3.3 Study 1

Together with opinion and approval polls, a wide variety of census, marriage, relationship, and dating data illustrates the ubiquity and universality of ingroup bias in romantic preferences and choices (e.g., Allport, 1954; L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Golebiowska, 2007; Levin et al., 2007; Office for National Statistics, 2005; H. Wang et al., 2007; W. Wang, 2012). The same data also illustrates that relationships with members of certain outgroups are preferred and endorsed to a significantly greater extent than relationships with members of other outgroups (e.g., Golebiowska, 2007; Levin et al., 2007; Office for National Statistics, 2005; W. Wang, 2012). To explain these preferences, moreover, numerous possible predictors have been proposed (e.g., L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2003; Golebiowska, 2007; Fang et al., 1998; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Johnson & Jacobson, 2005; Lalonde et al., 2007; Levin et al., 2007; Uskul et al., 2011; H. Wang & Kao, 2007). Nevertheless, there has been relatively

little research into the romantic preferences and the causes of such preferences amongst British people.

The main focus of the current cross-sectional study is to examine the romantic preferences, along with the perceptions of approval for majority group members' (i.e., Whites') relationships with members of the three largest non-mixed ethnic groups in Britain (Black, South Asian, White; Office for National Statistics, 2005). Drawing on census data and previous research, a pervasive ingroup preference is expected to emerge. Specifically, White individuals will perceive greater approval from others and will be significantly more likely to report that they would date, have a relationship with, and have a child with a White partner than a Black partner or a South Asian partner (e.g., BBC, 2002; Office for National Statistics, 2005). Furthermore, as there are a greater number of White - Black marriages than White - South Asian marriages in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2005), I also predict that White individuals will indicate that they would be more likely and would receive greater levels of approval from others to have relationships with Black people than South Asian people.

In addition to identifying the romantic preferences and perceived norms of White individuals in Britain, I explore what factors predict the likelihood of entering into the three relationships with Black, South Asian, and White partners. As previous research has proposed many, and often contradictory, factors for romantic preferences, I employ exploratory regression analyses to simultaneously investigate these proposed predictors. Such a strategy expands upon previous research as it not only evaluates the strength of one or two factors at a time, it evaluates the specific strengths of all the factors simultaneously, therefore providing a more detailed description of how these factors predict the likelihood to engage in certain romantic relationships. Due to previous contradictory findings and the exploratory nature of

the present study, however, no specific predictions can be made regarding the relative importance of each factor. Nevertheless, as different ethnic groups are associated with unique and specific attitudes (e.g., Allport, 1954; Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005), it is expected that the likelihood of entering into romantic relationships with different ethnic group members will be predicted by different characteristics and factors. Moreover, as different relationships (e.g., dating, long term relationships, and having children) vary in their depth of intimacy and are consequently predicted by different factors, it is also expected that the different types of relationships with the same ethnic group member may also be predicted by different factors (e.g., Levin et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2004; H. Wang et al., 2004).

3.4 Method

3.4.1 Participants and procedure

Across six recruitment sessions at the University of Leeds, 110 White undergraduate students (102 females and 8 males; $M = 18.81$ years old, $SD = 2.89$) completed a questionnaire booklet containing four sections. The first section collected demographic information along with general attitudes (detailed below). The three remaining sections used identical items to measure attitudes and contact with the three largest ethnic groups in the UK (Black, South Asian and White; Office for National Statistics, 2005). The presentation of these three sections was counterbalanced across six versions of the questionnaire booklet, and the booklets were randomly distributed to the participants. Participants received class credits for their participation.

3.4.2 Measures

3.4.2.1 Likelihood of having relationships

Participants indicated how likely they were to date, have a long term romantic relationship, and have a child with a Black person, South Asian person, and White person (1 = *Not at all likely* to 9 = *Very likely*; L. M. Brown et al., 2003).

3.4.2.2 General attitudes

Religiosity, political ideology, and romantic beliefs. Using 7 point scales, participants indicated their religiosity (1 = *Not at all religious*, 4 = *Somewhat religious* to 7 = *Extremely religious*) and their political ideology (1 = *Extremely conservative* to 7 = *Extremely liberal*). To assess romantic beliefs, participants indicated their beliefs in four aspects of romantic love (Romantic Beliefs Scale, Sprecher & Metts, 1989). ‘Love finds a way’ subscale consisted of 6 items; “If I love someone, I know I can make the relationship work, despite any obstacles”, “If I were in love with someone, I would commit myself to him or her even if my parents and friends disapproved of the relationship”, “If I love someone, I will find a way for us to be together regardless of the opposition to the relationship, physical distance between us or any other barrier”, “If a relationship I have was meant to be, any obstacle (e.g. lack of money, physical distance, career conflicts) can be overcome”, “I expect that in my relationship, romantic love will really last; it won’t fade with time”, “I believe if another person and I love each other we can overcome any differences and problems that may arise” (6 items, $\alpha = .80$). The ‘One and only’ subscale had three items; “I believe that to be truly in love is to be in love forever”, “Once I experience “true love”, I could never experience it again, to the same degree, with another person”, and “There will be only one real love for me” ($\alpha = .80$). ‘Idealization of love’ was measured with three items; “The relationship I will

have with my 'true love' will be nearly perfect", "I'm sure that every new thing I learn about the person I choose for a long term commitment will please me", and "The person I love will make a perfect romantic partner; for example he/she will be completely accepting, loving, and understanding" ($\alpha = .59$). Finally, the belief in 'love at first sight' was measured by three items; "I am likely to fall in love immediately if I meet the right person", "I need to know someone for a period of time before I fall in love with him/her" (reverse-scored), and "When I find my 'true love' I will probably know it soon after we meet" (3 items, $\alpha = .60$). All items were measured on a 7 point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*).

3.4.2.3 General group attitudes

A shortened, four item version of the Social Dominance Orientation scale was used to measure participants' belief in group superiority (Van Laar et al., 2005). The items were, "It is probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom", "Inferior groups should stay in their place", "We should increase social equality", and "We should do what we can to equalise conditions for different groups" (last two items reverse-scored, 1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*; $\alpha = .84$). Strength of participants' ethnic identity was assessed by the three subscales of the Social Identification Scale consisting of four items each (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*; J. E. Cameron, 2004). Ingroup ties was measured by; "I feel strong ties to other people in my ethnic group", "I have a lot in common with other people in my ethnic group", "I find it difficult to form a bond with other people in my ethnic group", and "I don't feel a sense of being 'connected' with other people in my ethnic group" (last two items reverse-scored, $\alpha = .62$). Ingroup affect consisted of the following items; "Generally, I feel good when I think about myself as a member of my ethnic group", "In general,

I'm glad to be a member of my ethnic group", "I often regret that I am a member of my ethnic group", and "I don't feel good about being a member of my ethnic group" (last two items reverse-scored, $\alpha = .71$). The centrality of ingroup to participants' identity was measured by; "I often think about the fact that I am a member of my ethnic group", "In general, being a member of my ethnic group is an important part of my self-image", "The fact that I am a member of my ethnic group rarely enters my mind", and "Overall, being a member of my ethnic group has very little to do with how I feel about myself" (last two items reverse-scored, ($\alpha = .62$))

Other-group orientation was measured by the six item subscale of the Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Scale which indicates the general willingness and interest to engage in intergroup contact (Phinney, 1992). Participants indicated to what extent they agreed with the following items on a 4 point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 2 = *Somewhat disagree*, 3 = *Somewhat agree*, 4 = *Strongly agree*); "I enjoy being around people from ethnic groups other than my own", "I often spend time with people from ethnic groups other than my own", "I am involved in activities with people from other ethnic groups", "I like meeting and getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own", "I do not try to become friends with people from other ethnic groups", "I sometimes feel it would be better if different ethnic groups did not try to mix together" (last two items were reverse-scored, $\alpha = .69$).

3.4.2.4 Specific group measures

Participants completed the following questions in reference to all three of the largest ethnic groups in the UK (White, South Asian, and Black), however, for brevity, the questions describing attitudes and contact with Black people are used below as an example. Questions concerning South Asian and White ethnic groups were exactly the same, just the ethnic group name was changed.

Contact with groups. Opportunity for contact with Black people was assessed with one item, “How often do you see Black people in the area you live?” (1 = *Never* to 7 = *Very often*, Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy & Cairns, 2009). The amount of previous positive contact with Black people was assessed by participants’ agreement to three items; “In the past, my experiences with Black people have been pleasant”, “Over the course of my life, I have had many Black friends”, and “I have had many positive experiences with Black people” (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*; adapted from Plant & Devine, 2003; Black $\alpha = .76$; South Asian $\alpha = .69$; White $\alpha = .28$). Participants also indicated the number of friendships they have with Black people (0, 1, 2 to 5, 5 to 10, over 10), the amount of time they spend with Black friends (1 = *Never*, 2 = *Occasionally*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Quite a lot*, 5 = *All the time*), and the how many White people they know who have friends who are Black (0 = *None*, 1 = *A few*, 2 = *About half*, 3 = *More than half*, 4 = *Most*; extended contact). These last three measures were adapted from R. N. Turner et al. (2008).

Cross-group romantic contact. Participants’ indicated if they have ever had a romantic relationship lasting a month or more with a Black person (0 = *No*, 1 = *Yes*; adapted from Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004). Extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships was measured by one item, “How many people of your ethnicity that you know well (e.g., family member, friends) have had a romantic relationship lasting a month or more with a Black person?” (0 = *None*, 1 = *A few*, 2 = *About half*, 3 = *More than half*, 4 = *Most*; adapted from R. N. Turner et al., 2008).

Group perceptions. To assess ingroup norms towards cross-group dating, participants reported to what extent they thought their friends, parents, and society in general would approve of the three relationships (dating, long term relationships, and children) with the three different ethnic group members (Black, South Asian, and White) (1 = *Disapprove greatly* to 7 = *Approve a great deal*; Estimation of

Other's Reactions; Miller et al., 2004). Perceptions of outgroup norms towards White people in general were also assessed by two items adapted from R. N. Turner et al. (2008): "In general, how much do you think Black people like White people?" (1 = *not at all*; 7 = *a lot*) and "In general, how happy do you think Black people would be to spend time with/be friends with someone who is White?" (1 = *not at all happy*; 7 = *very happy*; Black $r = .82$; South Asian $r = .83$; White $r = .49$).

Participants also rated how different or similar they are to Black people on a 4 point scale (1 = *Very different*, 2 = *Somewhat different*, 3 = *Somewhat similar*, 4 = *Very similar*; adapted from Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995), and to what extent they agree with the statement, "Black people are a threat to British citizens" (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 9 = *Strongly agree*, Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005). Furthermore, as familiarity with ethnic groups has been suggested to influence intergroup attitudes (e.g., Brewer, 1999), participants rated to what extent they were familiar with the Black community on a 7 point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*). Finally, anxiety towards the ethnic groups was measured by four items on a 5 point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 5 = *Strongly agree*; adapted from Plant & Devine, 2003). The items were; "I would feel uncomfortable when interacting with a Black person", "I would feel awkward when interacting with a Black person", "When interacting with a Black person, I would feel nervous", and "When interacting with a Black person, I would feel relaxed" (last item reversed scored; Black $\alpha = .75$; South Asian $\alpha = .80$; White $\alpha = .57$).

3.5 Results

3.5.1 Group preferences

To examine the main hypothesis of the study, repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted, followed by Bonferroni post-hoc tests, to establish participants' romantic group preferences. First, using a 3 (Partner ethnicity: White vs. Black vs. South Asian) x 3 (Relationship: Dating vs. Relationship vs. Child) repeated measures ANOVA, I investigated participants' reported likelihood of having the three different types of romantic relationship with members of the three largest ethnic groups in the UK (Figure 3.1). Main effects of partner ethnicity ($F(2, 216) = 357.30, p < .001$) and Relationship type were found ($F(2, 216) = 67.52, p < .001$), as was an interaction ($F(4, 432) = 13.73, p < .001$). Exploring the significant main effects revealed that participants were more likely to have any relationship with a White person ($M = 8.60$) than a Black person ($M = 4.94, p < .001$), and were more likely to have a relationship with a Black person than a South Asian person ($M = 3.36, p < .001$). Participants also reported that they were more likely to date ($M = 5.93$) than to have a relationship ($M = 5.65, p < .001$), and were more likely to have a relationship than to have a child ($M = 5.32, p < .001$).

Of interest, the significant interaction illustrated that participants were more likely to date a Black person ($M = 5.39$) than have a relationship with a Black person ($M = 4.95$), and were even less likely to have a child with a Black person ($M = 4.47$, all contrasts $p < .001$). The same trend appeared for relationships with South-Asian people ($M_{date} = 3.74$ vs. $M_{rel} = 3.35$ vs. $M_{child} = 2.99$; all contrasts $p < .001$), but not for relationships with White people ($M_{date} = 8.66$ vs. $M_{rel} = 8.64$ vs. $M_{child} = 8.50$; all contrasts *ns*).

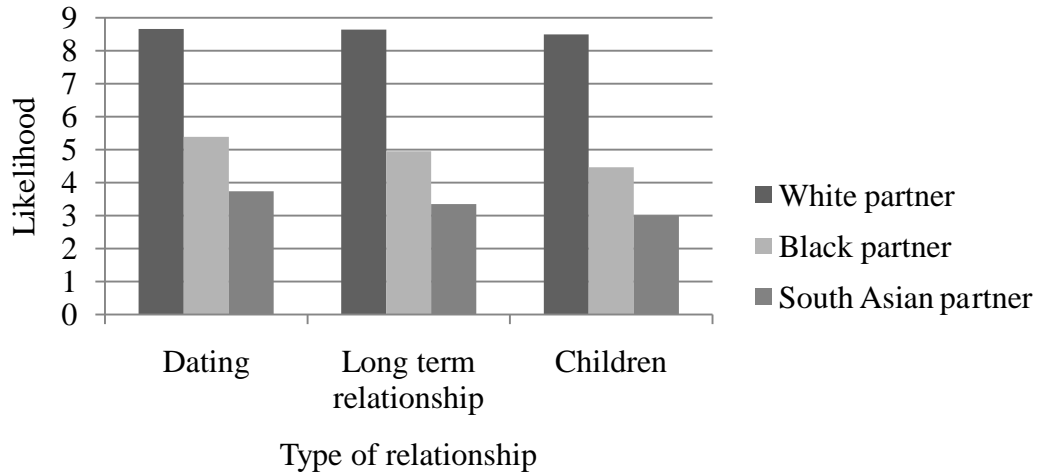


Figure 3.1. Likelihood of having different relationships with different ethnic group members.

Next, the perceived approval from parents, friends, and society to date, have a long-term relationship, and have a child with members of the three different ethnic groups were investigated (means of the approvals are presented in Table 3.1). A 3 (Partner ethnicity: White vs. Black vs. South Asian) x 3 (Relationship: Dating vs. Relationship vs. Child) x 3 (Target perceiver: Parent vs. Friend vs. Society) repeated measures ANOVA revealed main effects of partner ethnicity ($F(2, 216) = 145.83, p < .001$), relationship type ($F(2, 216) = 38.51, p < .001$), target perceiver ($F(2, 216) = 9.94, p < .001$), and interactions between partner ethnicity and relationship type ($F(4, 432) = 18.12, p < .001$) and between partner ethnicity and target perceiver ($F(4, 432) = 8.68, p < .001$). There was no significant interaction between relationship type and target perceiver ($F(4, 432) = .58, p = .68$) nor between all three factors ($F(8, 864) = .94, p = .48$).

To further examine the main effects and interactions, Bonferroni post-hoc tests were employed. Similar to the participants' reported likelihood of having relationships, these tests revealed that relationships with White people ($M = 6.52$)

were perceived to be significantly more approved of than relationships with Black people ($M = 4.97$), which were significantly more approved of than relationships with South Asian people ($M = 4.43$; all contrasts, $p < .001$). Participants also perceived more approval to date ($M = 5.40$) than to have relationships ($M = 5.35$), which were perceived to be more approved of than having a child ($M = 5.17$; all contrasts, $p < .002$). In addition, participants perceived more approval from friends ($M = 5.49$) than parents ($M = 5.17$, $p < .001$) and society ($M = 5.26$, $p = .005$) to have any relationship. There was no significant difference between the perceived approvals of parents and society.

Post-hoc tests examining the interactions revealed that, similar to participants' reported likelihoods, participants perceived significantly more approval to date a Black person ($M = 5.10$) than to have a relationship with a Black person ($M = 5.03$, $p = .007$) and even less approval to have a child with a Black person ($M = 4.77$, both contrasts, $p < .001$). The same trend was also found for relationships with South Asian people ($M_{date} = 4.56$, $M_{rel} = 4.47$, $M_{child} = 4.27$; all contrasts, $p < .001$).

The interaction between partner ethnicity and target perceiver illustrates that participants perceived that friends approve relationships with Black people ($M = 5.34$) and South Asian people ($M = 4.62$) more than parents ($M_{Black} = 4.69$, $M_{Asian} = 4.32$) or society ($M_{Black} = 4.87$, $M_{Asian} = 4.35$). The perceived approval of parents and society for relationships with cross-group members did not significantly differ from one another. In addition, there was no significant difference between the perceived approval of relationships with White people from friends ($M = 6.51$), parents ($M = 6.51$) and society ($M = 6.56$; all contrasts, $p > .74$).

In terms of actual dating behaviour, participants also reported a significant ingroup bias. Only 5 participants reported that they had ever dated a South Asian

person, another 5 participants reported that they had dated a Black person, while 101 participants reported that they had dated a White person.

Table 3.1. Marginal means and standard errors of the perceived approval of different relationships from different targets

| Relationship | Target Perceiver | White partner | Black partner | South Asian partner |
|------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Dating | | | | |
| | Parent | 6.50 (0.08) | 4.82(0.15) | 4.48(0.16) |
| | Friend | 6.51(0.08) | 5.47(0.13) | 4.73(0.15) |
| | Society | 6.59(0.07) | 5.03(0.12) | 4.48(0.14) |
| Long term relationship | | | | |
| | Parent | 6.52(0.08) | 4.76(0.15) | 4.34(0.16) |
| | Friend | 6.53(0.08) | 5.39(0.13) | 4.69(0.14) |
| | Society | 6.59(0.07) | 4.94(0.13) | 4.38(0.14) |
| Children | | | | |
| | Parent | 6.49(0.08) | 4.51(0.17) | 4.16(0.17) |
| | Friend | 6.48(0.08) | 5.15(0.15) | 4.45(0.16) |
| | Society | 6.50(0.09) | 4.64(0.14) | 4.20(0.15) |

Repeated measures ANOVAs were also conducted on the specific group contact and attitude measures. As illustrated in Table 3.2, results revealed significant differences between the contact and feelings participants had towards the three different ethnic groups.

Table 3.2 Marginal means, standard errors, and repeated measures ANOVAs for group contact and attitudes

| | White | Black | South Asian | <i>F</i> |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Extended contact with romantic relationships ^G (1-5) | 3.95(0.06) _a | 0.88(0.06) _b | 0.54(0.06) _c | 1246.62*** |
| Friendships (1-5) | 3.99(0.01) _a | 2.01(0.10) _b | 1.94(0.10) _b | 262.07*** |
| Time spent with friends (1-5) | 3.81(0.04) _a | 1.53(0.09) _b | 1.42(0.10) _b | 298.56*** |
| Extended friendships (1-5) | 3.97(0.02) _a | 1.97(0.11) _b | 1.84(0.11) _b | 229.84*** |
| Opportunity for contact (1-7) | 6.86(0.05) _a | 3.78(0.16) _b | 3.76(0.17) _b | 212.50*** |
| Positive experience (1-7) | 6.59(0.05) _a | 4.98(0.11) _b | 4.51(0.13) _c | 159.78*** |
| Familiarity (1-7) | 6.63(1.02) _a | 2.88(1.33) _b | 2.93(1.52) _b | 354.81*** |
| Similarity ^G (1-4) | 3.65(0.05) _a | 2.77(0.06) _b | 2.03(0.07) _c | 256.58*** |
| Anxiety ^G (1-5) | 1.62(0.07) _a | 2.07(0.09) _b | 2.34(0.10) _c | 28.47*** |
| Outgroup norms ^G (1-7) | 6.74(0.04) _a | 4.93(0.10) _b | 4.50(0.11) _c | 247.07*** |

Note. Response end points noted after measures. Differing subscripts indicate within-row significant differences ($p < .01$).

^GGreenhouse-Geisser correction used.

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Bonferroni post-hoc tests revealed that participants reported they had a greater amount of contact and held significantly more positive attitudes towards White people than they did towards Black people and South Asian people on all

measures (all $ps < .001$ except participants felt less threatened by White people than South Asian people: $p = .02$, and Black people: $p = .05$). Furthermore, post-hoc tests also revealed significant differences between the measures concerning Black people and the measures concerning South Asian people. Specifically, participants reported greater contact with cross-group romantic relationships involving a Black person than with a South Asian person and reported greater positive experience with Black people than with South Asian people (both $ps < .001$). In addition, participants felt that they were more similar to Black people than South Asian people ($p < .001$), felt less anxiety towards Black people than South Asian people ($p < .01$), and felt that the norms held by Black people towards White people were more positive than norms held by South Asian people ($p < .001$).

3.5.2 Predictors of relationship likelihoods

To analyse the exploratory aim of the study, simple correlations (Table 3.3) followed by nine separate hierarchical regression equations were conducted to establish what predicts the reported likelihood of having a variety of relationships (dating, long term relationship, having children) with members of three different ethnic groups (Black, South Asian, White). It is important to note that this dependent variable represents the reported likelihood of relationships and not participants' actual relationship behaviour.

Table 3.3 Simple correlations between proposed predictors and likelihoods of having all relationships with Black, South-Asian and White people

| | Date | Relationship | Child | Date | Relationship | Child | Date | Relationship | Child |
|---------------------|--------|--------------|--------|--------|--------------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|
| | White | White | White | Black | Black | Black | S.Asian | S.Asian | S.Asian |
| Age | .02 | .04 | .06 | .11 | .13 | .14 | -.13 | -.10 | -.09 |
| Gender | -.10 | -.14 | -.03 | -.02 | .01 | .04 | .08 | .10 | .12 |
| Religiosity | .09 | .11 | .08 | -.22* | -.25** | -.17† | -.16 | -.20* | -.21* |
| Political ideology | -.22* | -.16† | -.17† | .16† | .27** | .37*** | .20* | .18† | .23* |
| Love finds a way | .03 | .03 | -.01 | -.01 | .01 | -.05 | -.10 | -.09 | -.10 |
| One and only | -.08 | -.08 | -.01 | -.06 | -.04 | -.03 | -.09 | -.04 | -.06 |
| Idealisation | -.13 | -.09 | -.04 | .03 | .05 | .07 | .07 | .12 | .08 |
| Love at first sight | -.05 | -.11 | -.04 | -.12 | -.07 | -.10 | -.31*** | -.24* | -.20* |
| Ingroup affect | .36*** | .34*** | .42*** | -.28** | -.32*** | -.30** | -.24* | -.25* | -.22* |
| Ingroup ties | .26** | .24* | .19* | -.17† | -.24* | -.24* | -.12 | -.15 | -.13 |
| Ingroup centrality | .22* | .11 | .21* | -.25* | -.33*** | -.32*** | -.19† | -.21* | -.26** |

Table 3.3 continued.

| | Date | Relationship | Child | Date | Relationship | Child | Date | Relationship | Child |
|---------------------------|--------|--------------|--------|---------|--------------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|
| | White | White | White | Black | Black | Black | S.Asian | S.Asian | S.Asian |
| Other group orientation | -.14 | -.08 | -.07 | .30** | .36*** | .39*** | .36*** | .36*** | .37*** |
| SDO | .13 | .08 | .09 | -.21* | -.26** | -.32*** | -.15 | -.17† | -.21* |
| Previously dated | .29** | .20* | .18† | .24** | .29** | .26** | .19* | .17† | .21* |
| Extended romantic contact | .13 | .16 | .08 | .22* | .22* | .30** | .47*** | .47*** | .47*** |
| Friendships | .08 | .08 | .05 | .13 | .07 | .11 | .15 | .18† | .15 |
| Time spent with friends | .37*** | .30*** | .30*** | .18† | .18† | .16† | .31*** | .30*** | .28** |
| Extended friendships | -.01 | -.01 | -.03 | .12 | .13 | .09 | .20* | .21* | .19* |
| Opportunity for contact | .13 | .17† | .08 | .04 | .08 | .03 | .08 | .08 | .07 |
| Positive experience | .23* | .19* | .12 | .24* | .20* | .19* | .36*** | .38*** | .35*** |
| Threat | -.12 | -.17† | -.05 | -.27** | -.30*** | -.23* | -.24* | -.26** | -.27** |
| Anxiety | -.17† | -.16† | -.19* | -.33*** | -.34*** | -.36*** | -.33*** | -.30** | -.27** |

Table 3.3 continued.

| | Date | Relationship | Child | Date | Relationship | Child | Date | Relationship | Child |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------------|--------|--------|--------------|--------|---------|--------------|---------|
| | White | White | White | Black | Black | Black | S.Asian | S.Asian | S.Asian |
| Familiarity | .13 | .15 | .05 | .19* | .26** | .28** | .17 | .20* | .23* |
| Similarity | .03 | .08 | .18† | .47*** | .47*** | .43*** | .38*** | .33*** | .33*** |
| Group norms | .30*** | .19* | .19* | .25** | .27** | .20* | .36*** | .35*** | .39*** |
| Perceived parental approval | .30*** | .28** | .32*** | .44*** | .44*** | .42*** | .48*** | .51*** | .55*** |
| Perceived friend approval | .27** | .34* | .26** | .41*** | .41*** | .42*** | .46*** | .47*** | .48*** |
| Perceived societal approval | .25** | .25** | .37*** | .29** | .32*** | .27** | .39*** | .38*** | .35*** |

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

3.5.2.1 Simple correlations

Table 3.3 illustrates the simple correlations between the proposed predictor variables and the nine outcome variables assessing participants' likelihoods of entering into three different relationships with members of three different ethnic groups. These analyses revealed that many of the predictors were significantly correlated with the outcomes variables. For relationships with White people, individuals' political ideology (conservatism), ingroup affect, ingroup ties, number of previous dates with White people, time spent with White people, perceived norms of White people, and the perceived approvals of friends, family, and society were all positively correlated with participants' likelihood to date, have a relationship and have a child with a White person. In addition, ingroup centrality was positively associated with the likelihood of dating and having a child with a White person, positive experiences with White people were associated with dating and having a relationship with a White person, while anxiety towards White people was negatively associated with the likelihood of having a child with a White person.

For relationships with Black people, the correlations illustrated that being less religious, more liberal, having less ingroup ties, having the ingroup as less central to their identity (ingroup centrality), being less pleased with their ingroup (ingroup affect), having a greater other group orientation and a lower social dominance orientation, together with previous experience of dating Black people, knowing cross-group relationships involving Black partners, having previous positive experiences with Black people, evaluating Black people as less threatening, being less anxious of Black people, being more familiar with Black people, perceiving more similarity with Black people, perceiving Black people to hold more positive norms towards White people, and to perceive approval from friends, family

and society were all significantly associated with the likelihood of dating, having a relationship, and having a child with a Black person.

The likelihoods of having relationships with South Asian people were significantly correlated with the following variables: less religiosity, political liberalism, belief in love at first sight, lower ingroup affect, lower ingroup centrality, other group orientation, having previously dated a South Asian person, having extended contact with a cross-group relationship involving a South Asian person, time spent with South Asian friends, positive experiences with South Asian people, perceiving less threat from South Asians, being less anxious of South Asians, being more familiar with South Asians (though this was not significant for the likelihood to date South Asians), perceived familiarity and similarity of South Asians, perceived norms of South Asians and the perceived approval of friends, family and society to have such relationships.

As the simple correlations revealed that a wide range of factors were associated with the different relationships, to gain a clearer understanding of which factors were most important in predicting the likelihood of these relationships, I employed hierarchical regression analyses. Similar to Levin et al.'s (2007) analytic strategy, demographic and general beliefs were entered into the first step of the equations followed by group specific measures in the second step. This strategy was employed as it enabled the identification of significant group-specific predictors while controlling for general predictors that are known to be associated with individuals' reported likelihood of entering into a variety of relationships.

3.5.2.2 Demographic and general beliefs

Age, gender, general attitudes (religiosity and political ideology), and general romantic beliefs ('Love finds a way', 'One and only', 'Idealisation', 'Love

at first sight') were entered into the first step of the regression equations. As illustrated by the Model F and R^2 values in Table 3.4, these variables generally accounted for a significant proportion of variance in the reported likelihood of having cross-group relationships with South Asian and Black people (though dating Black people $R^2 = .07, p < .07$), but did not predict a significant amount of variance in the reported likelihoods of same-group relationships with White people (all $R^2 < .05, ps = ns$).

Table 3.4 β coefficients of age, gender, general attitudes and romantic beliefs predicting likelihoods of having different relationships

| | Date | Relationship | Children | Date | Relationship | Children | Date | Relationship | Children |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|----------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | White | White | White | Black | Black | Black | S. Asian | S. Asian | S. Asian |
| Age | .08 | .10 | .12 | .15 | .16 | .12 | -.13 | -.10 | -.09 |
| Gender | -.11 | -.14 | -.06 | -.06 | -.04 | .02 | .11 | .12 | .14 |
| Religiosity | .04 | .06 | -.01 | -.28** | -.31** | -.20* | -.11 | -.15 | -.16 |
| Political ideology | -.27* | -.22* | -.25* | .13 | .21* | .36*** | .25** | .24* | .27** |
| Love finds a way | .22 [†] | .20 | .14 | .04 | .06 | -.04 | -.12 | -.21 [†] | -.21 [†] |
| One and only | -.11 | -.11 | -.03 | .02 | -.01 | .04 | .08 | .11 | .09 |
| Idealisation | -.24 [†] | -.14 | -.16 | .11 | .12 | .20 | .31** | .38** | .34** |
| Love at first sight | -.04 | -.13 | -.14 | -.21 [†] | -.15 | -.18 [†] | -.41*** | -.32** | -.28* |
| Model <i>F</i> | 1.62 | 1.33 | 1.16 | 1.90 [†] | 2.61* | 3.42** | 4.26*** | 3.90*** | 3.65*** |
| <i>R</i> ² | .12 | .10 | .09 | .14 [†] | .19* | .23** | .27*** | .25*** | .24*** |

Note. Degrees of freedom for South Asian and White measures = $F(8,93)$ and Black measures = $F(8,91)$; [†] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Focusing on the cross-group romantic relationships, Table 3.4 shows that consistent with the simple correlations, a more liberal political attitude was related to the likelihood of having all three types of relationships with a South Asian person. Furthermore, a liberal political ideology was also related to the increased likelihood of having a long term relationship and having a child with a Black person.

Interestingly, comparing Table 3.3 and Table 3.4 also indicates that although the same variables may be correlated with the likelihoods of having different cross-group relationships, regression analyses illustrate that different variables *predict* the reported likelihoods of entering into relationships with different ethnic groups. Religiosity was, for example, found to be significantly correlated with the likelihood of having any cross-group romantic relationship (Table 3.3), however, regression analyses revealed that religiosity was a significant negative predictor of the likelihood of having any type of relationship with a Black person, yet did not predict the reported likelihood of having any relationship with a South Asian person.

In addition, the correlations and regressions also revealed that beliefs in romance played an important role in how likely an individual is to enter into a relationship with a South Asian person but these beliefs did not significantly predict the reported likelihoods of entering into relationships with Black people. Specifically, the belief that their partner is near perfect (idealisation) positively predicted the reported likelihoods of having all three relationships with a South Asian person, while believing in love at first sight negatively predicted those likelihoods. Believing that love finds a way was marginally negatively associated with the likelihood of having a relationship with a South Asian person and having a child with a South Asian person (both $ps = .09$). In addition, believing in love at first sight was marginally negatively associated with the likelihoods of dating ($p = .07$) and having a child with a Black person ($p < .10$).

These preliminary results suggest that having a liberal political attitude is associated with the general likelihood of entering into cross-group romantic relationships. Moreover, the results indicate that specific beliefs are associated with the reported likelihood of having relationships with the two outgroups: being less religious is associated with the likelihood of having relationships with Black people, whereas the likelihood of having relationships with South Asian people is significantly predicted by the idealisation of romantic partners and by a lack of belief in love at first sight.

3.5.2.3 Intergroup attitudes

Controlling for the demographic and general beliefs in the first step (age, gender, religiosity, political ideology, and romantic beliefs), variables concerning participants' contact and attitudes towards the three ethnic groups were entered in Step 2 of the hierarchical regression equations. General group attitudes were used in all nine equations and included other group orientation, social dominance orientation, affect towards the ingroup, ingroup ties, and the centrality of the ingroup to identity. Attitudes and contact that were specific to the group (i.e., measures detailed under 'specific group measures' in section 3.4.2.4) were entered into the relevant equations. Number of friendships with South Asian people, for example, was only entered into the equations relating to the likelihood of having relationships with South Asian people, and number of friendships with Black people was only entered into the equations relating to the likelihood of having relationships with Black people. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 3.5 and discussed by ethnic group below.

Table 3.5 β coefficients of group contact and attitudes at Step 2 of hierarchical regressions

| | Date White | Relationship White | Children White | Date Black | Relationship Black | Children Black | Date S. Asian | Relationship S. Asian | Children S. Asian |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Ingroup affect | .10 | .18 | .20 | -.30* | -.28* | -.12 | -.30** | -.22* | -.17 [†] |
| Ingroup ties | .01 | .03 | .04 | .02 | .01 | -.07 | .10 | .02 | .07 |
| Ingroup centrality | .22 [†] | .14 | .12 | .07 | -.02 | .12 | -.04 | -.08 | -.14 |
| Other-group orientation | .01 | .03 | .11 | .01 | .06 | .16 | .07 | .04 | .05 |
| SDO | .04 | .06 | .07 | .10 | .10 | .04 | .30* | .24* | .10 |
| Previously dated | .10 | .02 | .02 | .21* | .24* | .20* | .04 | .03 | .10 |
| Extended romantic contact | .11 | .16 | .08 | .16 | .18 | .20 [†] | .28** | .26* | .32** |
| Friendships | -.01 | -.07 | -.04 | .03 | -.09 | .16 | -.23* | -.17 | -.15 |
| Time spent with friends | .22 [†] | .18 | .22 [†] | -.02 | -.01 | -.10 | -.09 | -.12 | -.10 |
| Extended friendships | -.24 [†] | -.22 | -.10 | -.18 | -.12 | -.22 | -.16 | -.12 | -.07 |
| Opportunity for contact | .19 | .25 [†] | .15 | -.14 | -.12 | -.15 | .04 | .07 | .07 |

Table 3.5 (continued)

| | Date White | Relationship White | Children White | Date Black | Relationship Black | Children Black | Date S. Asian | Relationship S. Asian | Children S. Asian |
|---|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Positive experience | .17 | .10 | -.06 | .06 | .06 | .02 | .31* | .31* | .16 |
| Threat | -.16 | -.20 [†] | -.12 | -.02 | -.07 | .04 | -.13 | -.12 | -.09 |
| Anxiety | .04 | .03 | -.02 | .02 | .06 | -.08 | .05 | .11 | .12 |
| Familiarity | .10 | .11 | .02 | .01 | .05 | .06 | .16 | .21* | .17 [†] |
| Similarity | -.07 | -.02 | .03 | .40** | .36** | .22 [†] | .17 [†] | .09 | .04 |
| Group norms | .05 | -.09 | .04 | .14 | .12 | .04 | -.04 | -.09 | -.04 |
| Perceived parental approval | .32 | .33 | .23 | .05 | -.08 | -.11 | .05 | .23 [†] | .27 [†] |
| Perceived friend approval | .10 | -.04 | -.26 | .19 | .16 | .26 [†] | .17 | .07 | .03 |
| Perceived societal approval | -.25 | -.04 | .26 | .03 | .18 | .10 | .17 [†] | .22* | .20 [†] |
| Overall model <i>F</i> | 2.30** | 1.69* | 1.58 [†] | 2.63*** | 2.97*** | 3.14*** | 5.30*** | 5.32*** | 4.84*** |
| <i>R</i> ² _{change} | .35** | .29* | .29* | .37*** | .35*** | .32** | .40*** | .42*** | .41*** |

Note. Degrees of freedom for South Asian and White measures, $F(28,73)$ and Black measures, $F(28,71)$; [†] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

3.5.3 Group level predictors of the likelihood to have relationships with Black people

The overall model F s and R^2_{change} statistics illustrated in Table 3.5 indicate that the inclusion of the group measures in Step 2 of the regressions, controlling for the measures entered in Step 1, explained a significant amount of variance in the predictions of the likelihoods of having all three relationships with Black people. The regression coefficients in Table 3.5, furthermore, reveal that having previously dated a Black person, the perceived similarity of Black people to themselves, and ingroup affect were significant predictors of these likelihoods. Notably, having previously dated a Black person positively predicted the likelihood of having all three relationships with a Black person (dating: $\beta = .21, p < .05$; relationship: $\beta = .24, p < .05$; children: $\beta = .20, p < .05$). Perceived similarity to Black people also positively predicted the likelihood of dating ($\beta = .40, p < .01$) and having a relationship with a Black person ($\beta = .36, p < .01$), and marginally predicted the likelihood of having a child with a Black person ($\beta = .22, p = .08$). Ingroup affect was found to negatively predict the likelihood of dating ($\beta = -.28, p < .05$) and having a romantic relationship with a Black person ($\beta = -.30, p < .05$), but did not significantly predict the likelihood of having a child with a Black person ($\beta = -.12, p = \text{ns}$). The likelihood of having a child with a Black person was, however, marginally predicted by having extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship involving a Black person and a White person ($\beta = .20, p = .08$), and by the perceived approval of friends regarding having a child with a Black person ($\beta = .26, p = .09$).

3.5.4 Group level predictors of the likelihood to have relationships with South Asian people

Similar to the results concerning the likelihood of having relationships with Black people, the group-level predictors entered into Step 2 of the hierarchical regressions were found to account for a significant amount of variance in the reported likelihoods of having all three relationships with a South Asian person (see Table 3.5). Ingroup affect and extended contact with romantic relationships were again found to be associated with the likelihood of having relationships with South Asian people. In addition, positive experiences, familiarity with South Asian people, perceived parental and societal approvals, friendships with South Asians, and social dominance orientation were also identified as important predictors of having a variety of relationships with South Asian people.

Knowing an ingroup member who has had a relationship with a South Asian person positively predicted the likelihoods of having all three types of relationship with a South Asian person (dating: $\beta = .28, p < .01$; relationship: $\beta = .26, p < .05$; children: $\beta = .32, p < .01$). Ingroup affect was again found to have a significant negative association with the likelihood of dating ($\beta = -.30, p < .01$) and having a relationship with a South Asian person ($\beta = -.22, p < .05$), and it also showed a trend in predicting the likelihood of having a child with a South Asian person ($\beta = -.17, p = .11$). Having a greater amount of positive experiences with South Asian people was found to positively predict the likelihood of dating ($\beta = .31, p < .05$) and having a relationship with a South Asian person ($\beta = .31, p < .05$), while familiarity with South Asian people was a significant predictor of the likelihood of having a relationship with a South Asian person ($\beta = .28, p < .01$) and was a marginal

predictor of the likelihood of having a child with a South Asian person ($\beta = .17, p = .10$).

Perceived parental and societal approvals were also found to be associated with the likelihood of having relationships with South Asian people. Perceived societal approval was found to significantly predict the likelihood of having a relationship with a South Asian person ($\beta = .22, p < .05$) and marginally predict the likelihood of dating ($\beta = .17, p = .10$) and having a child with a South Asian person ($\beta = .20, p = .07$). Perceived parental approval was found to marginally predict the likelihoods of having a relationship ($\beta = .23, p = .08$) and having a child with a South Asian person ($\beta = .27, p = .07$).

Some counter-intuitive results also emerged. The quantity of South Asian friends was found to be *positively* correlated with dating a South Asian person ($r = .15$) but regression analyses revealed that it *negatively* predicted the likelihood of dating a South Asian person ($\beta = -.23, p < .05$). Social dominance orientation, furthermore, was found to be *negatively* correlated with dating ($r = -.15$) and having a relationship with a South Asian person ($r = -.18$) but *positively* predicted the likelihood of dating ($\beta = .30, p < .05$) and having a relationship with a South Asian person ($\beta = .24, p < .05$).

3.5.5 Group level predictors of the likelihood to have relationships with White people

The inclusion of group-level measures in the second step of the hierarchical regressions accounted for a significant proportion of variance and contributed to the significant regression models for the reported likelihoods of having all three types of relationship with White people (see Table 3.5; though likelihood of having a child with a White person, $F(28,73) = 1.58, p = .06$). Examining the regression

coefficients in Table 3.4, however, reveals that no predictors reached the conventional significance level of $p = .05$. Instead, a few variables were found to marginally predict the likelihood of having relationships with White people. Centrality of the ingroup to individuals' identity ($\beta = .22, p = .07$), time spent with White friends ($\beta = .22, p = .06$), and extended White friendships ($\beta = .24, p = .06$) were found to marginally predict the likelihood of dating a White person. Opportunity for contact with White people ($\beta = .25, p = .06$) and the perceived threat White people pose marginally predicted the likelihood of having a relationship with a White person ($\beta = -.20, p = .07$), while only time spent with White people was found to marginally predict the likelihood of having a child with a White person ($\beta = .22, p = .07$).

3.6 Discussion

This cross-sectional study examined the romantic group preferences of White individuals in Britain by investigating participants' reported likelihood to enter into three different relationships (dating, long term relationship, children) with members of three different ethnic groups (Black, South Asian, and White). Utilising suggestions from previous research, the study also explored what factors are important in predicting the likelihood of entering into these different relationships. As expected, significant group preferences were exhibited in which participants reported that they were significantly more likely to enter into relationships with White partners than Black partners who, in turn, were significantly preferred to South Asian partners. Exploratory analyses, furthermore, identified that different factors were important in predicting the likelihood of having different relationships with members of different ethnic groups. These findings support previous research

by demonstrating the pervasiveness of ingroup romantic bias (e.g., Allport, 1954; Brown et al., 2003; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Office for National Statistics, 2005). Moreover, the findings extend the literature by revealing the romantic preferences for Blacks over South Asians in the UK, and by illustrating that unique factors predict the likelihood of entering into relationships with members of different ethnic groups.

3.6.1 Preferences

Consistent with census data and previous research, ingroup preferences were found to be pervasive (e.g., Allport, 1954; Brown et al., 2003; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Office for National Statistics, 2005). White individuals reported that they were significantly more likely to engage in a variety of hypothetical romantic relationships with partners from their own ethnic group than with partners from two outgroups (Black or South Asian). Participants also perceived there to be greater approval for ingroup relationships, reported greater levels of contact with ingroup members, and held more positive attitudes and perceptions of their ingroup than they did towards either outgroup. Consequently, the findings illustrate that endogamy and ingroup preferences for less committed relationships (e.g., dating and longer-term relationships) remains a strong prevailing norm for the romantic choices of individuals in Britain.

In addition to the expected ubiquity of ingroup bias, relationships with Black people were revealed to be significantly more likely and perceived to be more approved of than relationships with South Asian people. This bias also emerged in the levels of extended romantic contact, the amount of positive experiences, perceived similarity, perceptions of outgroup norms, and reduced levels of intergroup anxiety. Furthermore, the intimacy of cross-group romantic relationships

also influenced participants' preferences and perceived approvals. Cross-group dating relationships were reported to be more likely and more approved of than the more intimate long term cross-group relationships, which in turn were more likely and more approved of than the very intimate child bearing cross-group relationships. Friends, moreover, were perceived to be more likely to approve of cross-group romantic relationships than either parents or society in general. Taken together, then, these findings suggests that although White individuals are relatively unlikely to enter into cross-group romantic relationships, if they do so, they would be more likely to have a Black partner than a South Asian partner in a dating, rather than a long term relationship, and they would receive more approval from their friends than their parents or society.

Despite being consistent with current marital data in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2005), the preference for Black partners over South Asian partners is intriguing. Firstly, these findings are in stark contrast to research conducted in the United States. In the US, cross-group relationships involving Black and White partners are the least approved of (Golebiowska, 2007) and represent the rarest composition of interethnic newlyweds in that nation (Passel, Wang, & Taylor, 2010). Moreover, as indicated by population figures in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2005) and the results of the current study (e.g., friendships, opportunity for contact), White individuals in Britain have similar levels of contact and opportunities for contact with Black people and South Asian people, yet White people are more likely to enter into and are more likely to know a cross-group relationship involving a Black person than a South Asian person. These observations suggest that cross-group relationships in Britain are distinct from cross-group relationships in the US. Furthermore, the results indicate that it is not contact or

opportunity for contact, per se, that predicts the likelihood of entering cross-group relationships but other factors that play an important role.

3.6.2 Predictors of same-group and cross-group relationships

In exploring which factors are significant in predicting the likelihood of entering into romantic relationships with ingroup and outgroup members, exploratory regression analyses revealed that distinct factors were associated with predicting relationships with certain ethnic group members. Moreover, due to the differing levels of intimacy and commitment each relationship represents, the importance and significance of the predictors were not consistent across relationship types (e.g., dating, relationships, children), even when the relationships were with the same hypothetical ethnic group partner. These findings not only suggest that same-group relationships are predicted by different factors than cross-group relationships, but they also highlight that different compositions (different outgroup partners) and different types of cross-group relationships (e.g., dating, relationships, children) are predicted by distinct factors.

3.6.2.1 Relationships with Black people

Of the general measures employed in the study, individuals' religiosity and political ideology were found to significantly predict the reported likelihood of entering into relationships with a Black person. Specifically, being less religious was found to predict greater likelihood to enter into all relationships with a Black person, whereas being politically liberal was found to predict a greater likelihood of being in a relationship and having a child with a Black person. These findings suggest that individuals who are bound by traditional values and beliefs and are motivated to maintain the status quo, as indicated in religious beliefs and political conservatism, are less likely to be open to relationships which threaten to erode traditional

boundaries and norms, such as cross-group relationships (Eastwick et al., 2009). Moreover, as the UK in general is significantly less religious and more politically liberal than the US (The Economist, 2008), these findings may also help to explain why Black-White pairs are the most common cross-group pairings in Britain (Office for National Statistics, 2005), yet are the rarest composition in the US (Passel et al., 2010).

In addition to religiosity and political ideology, several group factors were identified as significant predictors of the reported likelihood of entering into a cross-group romantic relationship with a Black person. Notably, having previously dated a Black person predicted greater likelihood of entering all three types of relationship with a Black person. In support of intergroup contact theory (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1997), this finding suggests that the romantic contact individuals had with outgroup members was positive enough to encourage further intergroup contact. As only 5 participants had ever dated a Black person, however, these findings should be treated with caution.

Perceived similarity was also found to predict the reported likelihood of dating and having a romantic relationship with a Black person. Supporting the similarity-attraction hypothesis (Byrne, 1971), individuals who perceived themselves to be similar to Black people reported that they were more likely to date and have a relationship with a Black person than those who perceived Black people to be less similar. Furthermore, as the results are consistent with previous interpersonal relationship research into a wide variety of relationships (e.g., Hatfield & Rapson, 1996), these results illustrate that cross-group romantic relationships with Black people are associated with the same interpersonal characteristics which shape other relationships.

The affect individuals feel towards their ingroup membership was also a significant predictor of the likelihood of dating and having a relationship with a Black person. Individuals who were relatively neutral, or even negative, towards their ingroup memberships were seemingly unmotivated to maintain a distinct ingroup identity via endogamy and, as such, were more willing to cross-group boundaries and enter into relationships with Black people. Conversely, individuals who were proud and pleased with their ingroup membership were less likely to enter into relationships with Black people. These findings corroborate previous research and illustrates that the strength of group identity is an important factor in the development of cross-group relationships (e.g., L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Lee & Gudykunst, 2001; Levin et al., 2007; Uskul et al., 2011).

In sum, the likelihood of White individuals dating and entering into a relationship with a Black partner was predicted by religiosity, political ideology, perceived similarity, ingroup affect, and by having previously dated a Black person. Furthermore, the findings also illustrate that although the same factors significantly predict dating and romantic relationships, those same factors, apart from previous dating experience, do not significantly predict the likelihood of having a child with a Black person to the same extent, suggesting that more intimate relationships are predicted by different factors.

3.6.2.2 Relationships with South Asian people

Political ideology was also found to be a significant predictor of the reported likelihood of having all three types of relationship with a South Asian person. Again, liberal participants reported that they were more likely to enter into any type of cross-group romantic relationship with a South Asian person than individuals who were more conservative. Considering political ideology has been identified as a

strong predictor of cross-group dating elsewhere (e.g., Eastwick et al., 2009; Johnson & Jacobson, 2005), the robustness of the findings in this study further attests to the assertion that political beliefs play an important role in the development of cross-group romantic relationships.

Romantic beliefs were also found to be associated with the reported likelihood of entering into relationships with a South Asian person. Specifically, being sceptical about falling in love at first sight while believing that their partner would be ideal (idealisation) predicted a greater likelihood of entering into all types of cross-group relationships with a South Asian person. Combining the associations of these two romantic beliefs suggests that individuals who are more practical yet still romantic are more likely to enter into relationships with South Asian people. Census data and results from this study show that relationships between White and South Asian partners in Britain are not only relatively rare, they are also significantly disapproved of, and are thus more likely to encounter opposition to their relationships (Office for National Statistics, 2005). Believing that relationships and love connections need time to develop but that once they are established the partner will be worth the effort, as represented by these particular romantic beliefs, might help individuals overcome these initial obstacles, objections, and disapproval. Nevertheless, as the reliability of these romantic belief subscales were low (Love at first sight $\alpha = .60$; Idealisation $\alpha = .59$), the interpretation of these results must be treated with caution.

Controlling for general beliefs, a variety of group-level factors were revealed to significantly predict the reported likelihood of entering into cross-group romantic relationships with a South Asian person. In particular, having extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship was found to significantly predict the likelihood of having all three relationships with a South Asian person. Supporting extended

contact theory which has generally been studied in regards to cross-group friendships (e.g., R. N. Turner et al., 2007b; 2008; Wright et al., 1997), these results imply that knowing an ingroup member in a romantic relationship with a South Asian person also encourages further cross-group contact. Although the mechanisms by which extended contact predicts further cross-group romantic contact were not investigated in the current study (e.g., perceived group norms, reduced anxiety, inclusion of other in self; Wright et al., 1997), the finding that extended contact predicts more favourable attitudes towards own cross-group dating is encouraging. Specifically, as White – South Asian relationships are on the rise in the UK, it seems that more individuals will have contact with these couples and, as such, an increasingly greater number of individuals will become more open, and perhaps even enter into cross-group romantic relationships.

Another form of intergroup contact was also found to significantly predict certain relationships with South Asian people. Having a greater number of pleasant experiences with South Asian people was associated with increased likelihood to date and have a relationship with a South Asian person. By replicating findings from cross-group friendship research, these results indicate that it is the quality, rather than quantity, of contact which is important in developing intimate cross-group relationships with South Asian people (e.g., R. N. Turner et al., 2007b).

Consistent with the findings that lower ingroup affect predicts a greater likelihood of entering into each type of relationship with a Black person, ingroup affect was also found to significantly predict the likelihood of dating and having a relationship with a South Asian person, while marginally predicting the likelihood of having a child with a South Asian person. The sheer extensiveness of these results suggests that characteristics associated with ingroup identity are extremely important in cross-group romantic relationship initiation. Specifically, when people

are proud to be an ingroup member, they are less likely to look to other groups for potential partners. On the other hand, those individuals who derive less pleasure from their ingroup membership are more receptive to the idea of finding an outgroup romantic partner. Combining these results with the startling group preferences found in this study illustrates that group memberships and the affective ties one has with the ingroup are integral factors which are significantly associated with romantic relationships formations.

Although not as powerful or extensive in predicting cross-group relationships with South Asian people, familiarity and perceived societal approval were also found to significantly predict the reported likelihood of having a romantic relationship with a South Asian person and marginally predict the likelihood of having a child with a South Asian person. Both these findings support similar hypotheses from the intergroup relations and interpersonal relationships literatures (e.g., Allport, 1954; L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Felmlee, 2001; Moreland & Zajonc, 1982; R. N. Turner et al., 2008). Specifically, familiarity is proposed to be an integral factor in interpersonal attraction (Moreland & Zajonc, 1982) and in intergroup relations where “the familiar is preferred” (Allport, 1954, p. 42). In addition, perceived approval is a known predictor of relationship longevity and satisfaction (e.g., Etcheverry & Agnew, 2004; Felmlee, 2001), while social contexts and social climates, including perceptions of approval for intergroup contact, shape individuals’ amount of contact (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1991; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997). Furthermore, as these factors were not found to predict the likelihood of dating a South Asian person, familiarity and perceived societal approval may only become important factors when individuals enter into more serious cross-group relationships with

South Asian people, again highlighting that different types of relationships with the same group members are predicted by different variables.

Regression analyses exploring the predictors of the reported likelihoods of entering into relationships with South Asian people also revealed some unexpected findings. Contrary to both intergroup contact theory, which suggests that having positive relationships with outgroup members leads to more intimate relationships (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998), and interpersonal attraction theories which suggest that romantic relationships can develop from friendships (e.g., Guerrero & Mongeau, 2008), having South Asian friends was found to significantly reduce the likelihood of dating a South Asian person. In addition, as cross-group relationships can threaten group boundaries and hierarchies, it was hypothesised that White people who reported a greater SDO would want to maintain their group dominance and distance from other social groups and, as such, would be less likely to be willing to have a relationship with an outgroup member. In contrast, however, believing in social dominance was found to significantly positively predict the likelihood of dating and having a relationship with a South Asian person.

An explanation for both these surprising findings may be that the effects of these variables are being suppressed in the multiple regression analyses. Notably, correlational analyses reveal that, consistent with hypotheses, South Asian friendships were positively associated with the likelihood of dating a South Asian person, while SDO was negatively associated with the likelihoods of dating and having a relationship with a South Asian person. As the direction of the associations between the variables of interest is different for the correlational data and the regression coefficients, this suggests that one or more variables within the regression equations may be impacting upon the regression equations and may be, therefore, inflating the predictive value of friendships and SDO on the likelihoods of the

relationships. As such, the surprising findings concerning South Asian friendships and SDO on the likelihoods of having relationships with South Asian people should be treated with caution.

Overall, then, exploratory analyses investigating cross-group relationships with South Asian people revealed that four factors were significant predictors of the reported likelihood of engaging in all three types of relationships with South Asian people. Specifically, being politically liberal, believing that love takes time to develop, believing that romantic partners will be ideal, and having extended contact with a relationship between a White person and a South Asian person all contributed to increasing the likelihood of entering into each type of relationship with a South Asian partner. In addition, other notable predictors were ingroup affect and positive experiences which were associated with the likelihood of dating and having romantic relationships with a South Asian person. Familiarity and perceived societal approval, meanwhile, were associated with greater likelihood of having a relationship with a South Asian person. Although these findings may have been impacted by suppression effects within the regression analyses, these findings not only indicate the importance of political ideology, romantic beliefs and extended contact in predicting the likelihood of having cross-group relationships with South Asian people, they also illustrate that distinct factors are important in predicting the likelihood of entering into different relationships with South Asian people.

3.6.2.3 Comparison of cross-group relationships

According to the current data and recent census figures (Office for National Statistics, 2005), White people in Britain are significantly more likely to enter into romantic relationships with Black partners than South Asian partners. Moreover, this preference for Blacks over South Asians is consistent for all types of romantic

relationships (i.e., dating, long term relationships, and having children with). These robust findings illustrate that although romantic preferences are powerfully predicted by an ingroup preference norm, there are also preferences for particular outgroups in which partners from certain outgroups are preferred (Blacks) to others (South Asians).

In an attempt to explore what factors may predict this preference for one outgroup over another, I examined possible factors that have been proposed to be associated with the likelihood of entering into cross-group relationships. These exploratory analyses revealed two important points. First, just as same-group relationships are thought to be predicted by different factors than cross-group relationships, relationships with different cross-group partners are also predicted by different factors. Although political ideology and ingroup affect were found to be significantly associated with the likelihood of entering into a cross-group relationship with either a Black or South Asian partner, the majority of predictors were not consistent across the two outgroups. For example, the reported likelihoods of having relationships with Black people were generally predicted by religiosity and previous romantic contact with Black people, whereas the reported likelihoods of having relationships with a South Asian person were predicted by romantic beliefs and extended romantic contact. A second important finding was that different relationships (i.e., dating, long-term relationships, having children) with the same outgroup partner are further predicted by different factors. Dating and romantic relationships with South Asian and Black partners, for example, were predicted by SDO and similarity, respectively, yet having a child with those partners were not predicted by those same factors.

These findings illustrate the uniqueness and complexity of each particular type of cross-group relationship and highlight the difficulties involved in identifying

why Black partners are preferred to South Asian partners. Nevertheless, although the study was unable to shed much light on why Blacks are preferred to South Asians, the study did support previous research in illustrating that partners from certain outgroups are preferred to others.

3.6.2.4 Relationships with White people

Despite explaining a significant amount of variance in the likelihoods of dating, having a romantic relationship, and having a child with a White partner, none of the individual variables in this study were found to significantly predict any of the likelihoods to have same-group relationships. Nevertheless, ingroup orientated variables (ingroup centrality, time spent with White friends, extended White friendships, and opportunity for contact with White people) were found to marginally predict the likelihoods of different relationships with White people. Furthermore, the perceptions of the threat White people pose was also found to marginally negatively predict the likelihood to enter into a relationship with a White person. Combining these marginal findings, then, suggests that being ingroup orientated, having greater amount of contact with the ingroup, and perceiving less threat from the ingroup might increase the likelihood of having same-group relationships.

These analyses must, however, be interpreted with caution. Firstly, none of the predictors were actually significant at the conventional probability level ($p = .05$). More importantly, measures assessing participants' attitudes and contact with White people evidenced poor reliability (e.g., anxiety felt towards White people $\alpha = .57$; perceptions of White norms $r = .49$) and the ranges of responses were severely truncated (e.g., responses indicating White friendships, White extended friendships, and opportunity for contact with White people ranged from 3 to 4 on 4 point scales).

A possible reason for the poor reliability of measures assessing the ingroup is that White participants may find questions assessing their attitudes towards other White people difficult to answer. For example, as the ingroup is usually seen as extremely heterogeneous (e.g., Mullen & Hu, 1989) and is made up of people who elicit very different responses (e.g., friends, family, and strangers), asking participants to assess how they feel towards such a varied group may pose a problem. Conversely, this does not occur for measures assessing outgroups because outgroups are thought to be perceived to be more homogeneous and so measures assessing participants' attitudes towards the outgroups are more reliable. Due to these measurement issues, then, it is difficult to have any confidence in the results generated by the analyses of the data assessing the predictors of relationships with White people.

3.7 Limitations and future directions

In addition to the measurement issues surrounding attitudes and contact towards fellow ingroup members, additional methodological limitations and unique characteristics of the study may also limit the generalisability of this investigation. Firstly, the study employed a correlational design to assess romantic preferences and, as such, causality of such preferences is difficult to distinguish. The characteristics of the sample, furthermore, may also limit the study. Notably, due to practical reasons, I used White participants in Britain for the current study. As different groups perceive other groups differently (e.g., Allport, 1954; Brewer, 1999; Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005), and ethnicity has been identified as a significant predictor of cross-group romantic relationships (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Levin et al., 2007; Uskul et al., 2011), the results from this study may not easily generalise to the attitudes of members of other groups.

Another characteristic which may limit the generalisability of this study is the preponderance of female participants. Specifically, as only eight of the 110 participants were male, I was unable to explore the possible effects of gender in this study and, consequently, the results found may be more indicative of female attitudes and opinions. Indeed, as gender has been identified as a significant predictor of cross-group romantic relationships (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Levin et al., 2007; Uskul et al., 2011), and females are proposed to be more discriminate in their romantic partner choices than males (e.g., Miller et al., 2004), the results found in this study may only be applicable and generalisable to other White females.

In addition, the study was conducted at a University in the North of England. Although the actual location of the university may not limit the generalisability of the study because the student body consists of individuals from around the world, the reliance on students to participate may limit the scope of this study. Importantly, students at university tend to have similar levels of education, be around the same age, and have a truncated range of socio-economic statuses; all of which are proposed to be important predictors in cross-group relationships (e.g., Golebiowska, 2007; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Levin et al., 2007; W. Wang et al., 2004). Using a wider variety of participants who vary in age, gender, SES, ethnicity, occupation, and various other factors, therefore, would not only help identify the important predictors of cross-group romantic relationships, it would also increase the generalisability of the results.

To establish romantic group preferences, I used the three largest non-mixed ethnic groups in England and Wales as target groups in the study (Office for National Statistics, 2005). This enabled me to investigate general ethnic group preferences and their related predictors. Nevertheless, there may be important group

and sub-group distinctions that influence these preferences which are beyond the scope of the current study. For example, preferences for relationships with partners from ethnic sub-groups (e.g., South Asians consist of Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans) and other ethnic groups, such as Chinese, may be predicted by different variables. Further research could explore the likelihoods, approvals and predictors of these different partner compositions.

Attention also has to be paid to the difference between individuals' actual dating behaviour and their reporting of how likely they are to have certain relationships with certain people. For example, although individuals may report that they are likely to have a relationship with an outgroup member, other factors such as being in a current relationship, lack of opportunity, or even unrequited advances, may restrict the initiation of cross-group relationships, even though individuals are willing. The reported likelihood of relationships, therefore, should not be viewed as entirely predictive of actual dating behaviour. Instead, although it may predict dating behaviour to a certain extent, reporting that they are likely to have a relationship with someone also illustrates positive attitudes towards such contact and, as such, is informative.

3.8 Summary

Study 1 supported previous research and predictions suggesting that individuals exhibit a pervasive ingroup bias in their romantic choices and behaviours (e.g., Allport, 1954; L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Levin et al., 2007; Office for National Statistics, 2005). Ingroup partners were overwhelmingly preferred to outgroup partners for dating, long-term relationships, and for having children with. Moreover, perceived approval of the relationships also illustrated that individuals perceive relationships with outgroup members to

encounter significantly greater disapproval from friends, family and society than same-group relationships. Such findings indicate that endogamy is a comprehensive and powerful norm which continues to strongly predict romantic choices.

In addition, the study also revealed that White individuals report that they are more likely to have relationships and perceive greater approval to have relationships, with Black partners than South Asian partners, illustrating that ingroup bias is not the only factor which is associated with individuals' romantic choices. Indeed, further exploratory analyses revealed that although political ideology and ingroup affect were important predictors of the reported likelihoods to have relationships with Black people and South Asian people, the majority of factors that were found to predict the likelihood of having relationships with members of the two outgroups were distinct from one another.

Having established that cross-group romantic relationships are both rare and marginalised, while illustrating the ubiquitous nature of ingroup romantic preferences in Britain, the following chapters of the thesis investigate how contact with these relatively rare cross-group romantic relationships predict individuals' intergroup attitudes.

Chapter 4

Intergroup attitudes and interpersonal perceptions associated with having a cross-group romantic relationship

From strangers to acquaintances, neighbours to colleagues, roommates to friends, various different forms of intergroup contact have been found to reduce prejudice and improve attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Furthermore, more intimate, long-term forms of contact, such as cross-group friendships, have been identified as being especially effective at reducing prejudice (Pettigrew, 1997; 1998; R. N. Turner et al., 2007). Yet, despite this emphasis on long-term, intimate intergroup contact and the preponderance of studies into many other forms of intergroup contact, there has been surprisingly little research on the intergroup consequences of having a cross-group romantic relationship (see Levin et al., 2007 for a notable exception).

Despite the relative scarcity in the intergroup relations field, research examining cross-group romantic relationships is common in the interpersonal relationships field (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006, 2007; Miller et al., 2004; H. Wang & Kao, 2007; H. Wang et al., 2004). As described in Chapter 2 and illustrated in Study 1, this research has revealed that cross-group romantic relationships are not only rare, they continue to be the subject of disapproval and discrimination. This disapproval, furthermore, may have an impact upon the relationship and partners involved. Some research suggests that this disapproval can hinder the development of these relationships and is responsible for the higher termination rates compared to same-group relationships (e.g., H. Wang et al., 2004). Other research, however, suggests that the influence of disapproval is

negligible as cross-group partners can overcome the hostility they encounter without it impacting upon the quality or longevity of their relationships (e.g., Gurung & Duong, 1999; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998).

4.1 Study 2

In Study 2, I unite the interpersonal relationships field with intergroup contact theory to investigate the association between having a cross-group romantic relationship and interpersonal and intergroup attitudes. I seek to expand upon previous interpersonal relationships research by examining the perceived approval of cross-group romantic relationships in Britain by individuals actually in the relationships and attempt to clarify how this approval predicts the quality of partners' relationships. In addition, I compare the intergroup attitudes of cross-group partners and same-group partners.

Due to the similarity of romantic relationships and friendships, I expect to find that individuals who experience romantic contact with an outgroup member (cross-group partners) will exhibit more positive intergroup attitudes than individuals who have not engaged in this form of intergroup contact (same-group partners; e.g., Allport, 1954; Levin et al., 2007; Pettigrew, 1997, 1998). Nevertheless, as cross-group partners are also expected to encounter greater disapproval than same-group partners (e.g., Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Levin et al. 2007; Miller et al., 2004), I am mindful that certain characteristics of cross-group romantic relationships, including relationship status, disapproval, and quality, may moderate or nullify the expected positive intergroup attitudes (see sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.2.1 for further discussion).

To compliment the analyses of cross-group romantic contact and provide confidence that the data fits with previous investigations of intergroup contact, I also

examine how cross-group friendships, mediated by intergroup anxiety, predicts intergroup attitudes (e.g., Stephan & Stephan, 1985; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a, 2007b, 2008).

4.2 Method

4.2.1 Participants

Two-hundred and two White heterosexual participants (160 females) between the ages of 18 and 60 years old (80% between 18-25 years) were recruited from the University of Leeds, University of Nottingham, an online support service for people of mixed ethnicity (www.intermix.org), a facebook advertisement, and word of mouth. Although I attempted to analyse if place of recruitment influenced the results of the study, as most responses to the question “Where did you hear about this study?” were unclear (e.g., “Email”, “website”), such analyses were not possible. Participants completed the online study in return for an entry into a monetary prize draw.

4.2.2 Measures

4.2.2.1 Cross-group romantic relationships

Participants indicated if they had ever been in a cross-group romantic relationship with a person of a different ethnicity. Fifty-nine participants indicated that they had been in a cross-group relationship (22 current relationships and 37 past relationships). Participants who had never had a cross-group romantic relationship ($n = 143$) assessed a same-group relationship they had been involved in (100 current relationships and 43 past relationships).

4.2.2.2 Interpersonal measures

Relationship approval. Participants indicated the extent to which they believed their partner's and their own family and friends approve(d) of their relationship (1 = *very much disapprove* to 7 = *very much approve*), in addition to the overall encouragement they receive(d) to continue with their relationship (1 = *lots of discouragement* to 7 = *lots of encouragement*, adapted from Social Network Approval; Felmlee, 2001; $\alpha = .82$).

Relationship quality. The satisfaction, investment, alternatives and the commitment of the participants' relationships were assessed by the shortened version of the Investment Scale (1 = *Do not agree at all* to 9 = *Agree completely*; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Rusbult, 1980). Relationship satisfaction was assessed by three items; "Our relationship makes me very happy", "I feel satisfied with our relationship", and "My relationship is much better than other's relationships" ($\alpha = .89$). Participants' investment into the relationship was measured by five items; "I feel very involved in our relationship - like I have put a great deal into it"; "I have put a great deal into our relationship that I would lose if the relationship were to end", "Many aspects of my life have become linked to my partner (recreational activities, etc) and I would lose all of this we were to break up", "My relationships with friends and family would be complicated if my partner and I were to break up (e.g., partner is friends with people I care about)", and "Compared to other people I know, I have invested a great deal into my relationship with my partner" ($\alpha = .86$). The quality of alternatives to the relationship for the participants was assessed by three items; "My needs for intimacy, companionship, etc. could easily be fulfilled in an alternative relationship", "My alternatives to our relationship are close to ideal (alternatives mean dating another person/spending more time with friends or my own)", and "My alternatives are attractive to me" ($\alpha = .76$). Participants'

commitment to their relationship was measured by four items; “I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner”, “I feel very attached to our relationship – very strongly linked to my partner”, “I want our relationship to last forever”, and “I am orientated toward the long-term future of my relationship (e.g., I imagine being with my partner several years from now)” ($\alpha = .94$).

4.2.2.3 Intergroup measures

As the largest minority group in the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2005), feelings and attitudes towards South Asian people were used to assess participants’ intergroup attitudes. To examine the generalisability of the attitudes, the more general scales (approval of cross-group dating and feeling thermometers) also included items assessing Black people, the second largest minority group in the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2005).

Cross-group friendships. As time spent with outgroup friends is associated with the greatest impact on intergroup attitudes (Davies et al., 2011), participants’ contact with cross-group friends was indicated by the following item; “In my circle of friends there are people who are of a different ethnicity to me” (1 = *Very rarely or never*, 2 = *Rarely*, 3 = *More often than rarely*, 4 = *Often*, 5 = *Very often*; Groweic, 2007).

Intergroup anxiety. Intergroup anxiety towards South Asian people was measured by the four items detailed in section 3.4.2.4, though ‘Black people’ was replaced by ‘South Asian people’ (Plant & Devine, 2003; $\alpha = .88$).

Approval of cross-group romantic relationships. Participants indicated on 5-point scales (1 = *Strongly oppose* to 5 = *Strongly favour*) to what extent they would favour or oppose certain ingroup members (parents, siblings, White friends, White distant relatives, and White acquaintances) having a romantic relationship with a

Black person ($\alpha = .93$) and a South Asian person ($\alpha = .93$; adapted from Golebiowska, 2007).

Specific outgroup attitudes. Separate feeling thermometers were used to assess participants' feelings towards South Asian people in general and Black people in general (0 = *Extremely cold and unfavourable* to 100 = *Extremely warm and favourable*; Wittenbrink, Judd, & Park, 2001).

To further evaluate participants' attitudes towards South Asian people, positive affect for South Asians and the perception of threat from South Asians were also measured (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005). Positive affect was measured by three items; to what extent participants like, experience positive feelings, and feel happiness toward South Asian people (0 = *Not at all* to 9 = *Extremely*; $\alpha = .91$). Threat perceptions were assessed by participants' indicating their agreement, on a 7 point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*), to statements suggesting that South Asian people pose 11 different threats; "They are dangerous", "They pose a threat to British citizens", "They threaten jobs", "They threaten economic opportunities", "They threaten personal possessions", "They threaten personal rights", "They threaten personal freedoms", "They take more than they give", "They violate trust", "They hold different values from me", and "They endanger my safety" ($\alpha = .95$). Although Cottrell and Neuberg (2005) argue that it is important to analyse each affective reaction and threat perceptions separately to understand the rich texturing of emotions elicited by certain groups, as the items concerning positive affect and threat perceptions showed good internal consistency and I wanted to understand individuals' general affect and threat perceptions, I decided to combine the items into the two separate respective scales for the current study.

General intergroup attitudes. To assess general intergroup attitudes, participants' reported their other-group orientation (Phinney, 1992; $\alpha = .81$) and

social dominance orientation (Van Laar et al., 2004; $\alpha = .87$). These scales are described in full in section 3.2.4.3.

4.3 Results

4.3.1 Interpersonal measures

As relationship status (past vs. current) undoubtedly plays a significant role in determining the quality of a relationship, I conducted a 2 (relationship type: cross-group vs. same-group) x 2 (relationship status: current vs. past) ANOVA to investigate the quality and perceived approval of same and cross-group relationships. Significant main effects of relationship status were found for all the interpersonal measures indicating that, unsurprisingly, current relationships were of higher quality and received more approval than past relationships (Satisfaction: $F(1, 198) = 63.56, p < .001$; Alternatives: $F(1, 198) = 16.73, p < .001$; Commitment: $F(1, 198) = 82.76, p < .001$; Investment: $F(1, 198) = 35.82, p < .001$; Approval: $F(1, 198) = 28.29, p < .001$). Of interest to the study, only one significant main effect for relationship type was found. Cross-group partners perceived significantly greater disapproval of their relationship than same group partners, $F(1, 198) = 5.73, p = .02$ but did not report lower relationship quality (all F s $< .61, p$ s = ns) and there were no significant interactions (all F s $< 2.13, p$ s = ns).

4.3.2 Intergroup measures

The means, standard deviations and independent t -tests of the intergroup measures for the two types of partners (cross-group and same-group) are presented in Table 4.1. Pearson correlations for the entire sample are presented in Table 4.2. As illustrated by the significant t -tests in Table 4.1 and significant correlations in Table 4.2, having a cross-group romantic relationship was significantly associated

with only two variables: having cross-group friendships and having a greater other-group orientation. Having a cross-group romantic relationship was not significantly associated with the approval of cross-group dating, attitudes towards specific outgroups, or a social dominance orientation (all $r_s < .11$, $p_s = ns$). Furthermore, investigating the means of the responses in Table 4.1 indicates that there were no ceiling or floor effects for these measures.

Table 4.1 Intergroup attitudes by relationship type

| | Cross-group | Same-group | <i>t</i> -test |
|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| | <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>) | <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>) | (<i>df</i> = 200) |
| Cross-group friendships | 3.27(1.10) | 2.68(1.16) | 3.36*** |
| Intergroup anxiety | 2.06(1.08) | 2.00(1.14) | 0.35 |
| Approval S. Asian partner | 3.48(0.71) | 3.35(0.84) | 1.10 |
| Approval of Black partner | 3.52(0.71) | 3.38(0.83) | 1.17 |
| S. Asian thermometer | 68.74(21.42) | 69.15(20.87) | 0.13 |
| Black thermometer | 70.85(21.76) | 70.07(21.51) | 0.23 |
| Positive affect | 6.19(1.31) | 5.84(1.60) | 1.15 |
| Threat perceptions | 2.66(1.42) | 2.51(1.59) | 0.64 |
| Other-group orientation | 3.50(0.45) | 3.21(0.53) | 3.73*** |
| Social dominance orientation | 1.80(0.96) | 1.99(1.17) | -1.14 |

Note. ‘Approval of S. Asian partner’ and ‘Approval of Black partner’ refer to participants’ approval of five ingroup members having a romantic relationship with South Asian partners and Black partners, respectively.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 4.2 Pearson correlations of intergroup attitudes using all sample data

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|----------------------------------|---|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. Cross-group relationship | - | .23** | .02 | .08 | .08 | .01 | .02 | .11 | .05 | .26*** | -.08 |
| 2. Cross-group friendships | | - | -.25*** | .25*** | .25*** | .16* | .18* | .30*** | -.25*** | .55*** | -.22** |
| 3. Intergroup anxiety | | | - | -.28*** | -.25*** | -.40*** | -.30*** | -.50*** | .56*** | -.61*** | .48*** |
| 4. Approval of S. Asian partner | | | | - | .96*** | .35*** | .33*** | .35*** | -.38*** | .37*** | -.24** |
| 5. Approval of Black partner | | | | | - | .28*** | .37*** | .27*** | -.40*** | .36*** | -.22** |
| 6. S. Asian thermometer | | | | | | - | .81*** | .61*** | -.34*** | .34*** | -.28*** |
| 7. Black thermometer | | | | | | | - | .50*** | -.27*** | .32*** | -.19** |
| 8. Positive affect | | | | | | | | - | -.46*** | .56*** | -.40*** |
| 9. Threat perceptions | | | | | | | | | - | -.48*** | .55*** |
| 10. Other-group orientation | | | | | | | | | | - | -.42*** |
| 11. Social dominance orientation | | | | | | | | | | | - |

Note. $N = 202$; cross-group relationships dummy coded: cross-group partners = 1 ($n = 59$), same-group partners = 0 ($n = 143$).

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Moderator analyses. To explore why cross-group romantic relationships were uncorrelated to the majority of the intergroup measures, I conducted analyses examining the potential moderating roles of relationship status (past or current relationship), relationship quality, and others' disapproval toward their romantic relationship. ANOVAs revealed no significant interactions between relationship status (past vs. present) and relationship type (cross-group vs. same-group) on the intergroup measures (all $F(1, 198) < 3.73$, $ps = ns$). Moderated regression analyses also found no moderating influence of relationship alternatives (all R^2 changes $< .02$, $ps = ns$), investment (all R^2 changes $< .02$, $ps = ns$), commitment (all R^2 changes $< .01$, $ps = ns$), or others' disapproval on any of the intergroup attitudes (all R^2 changes $< .01$, $ps = ns$).

Relationship satisfaction was, however, found to moderate the associations between relationship type and both feeling thermometers (South Asian thermometer: R^2 change = .02, $F(1, 198) = 4.19$, $p = .04$; Black thermometer: R^2 change = .02, $F(1, 198) = 4.87$, $p = .03$). As depicted in Figures 4.1 and 4.2, same-group partners reported more positive feelings towards outgroup members when they were more satisfied with their own romantic relationship; South Asian thermometer: $\beta = .20$, $t(141) = 2.41$, $p = .02$ and Black thermometer: $\beta = .19$, $t(141) = 2.35$, $p = .02$. However, relationship satisfaction was not associated with cross-group partners' feelings towards South Asian people ($\beta = -.10$, $t(57) = -.78$, $p = .44$) or Black people ($\beta = -.13$, $t(57) = -1.01$, $p = .32$).

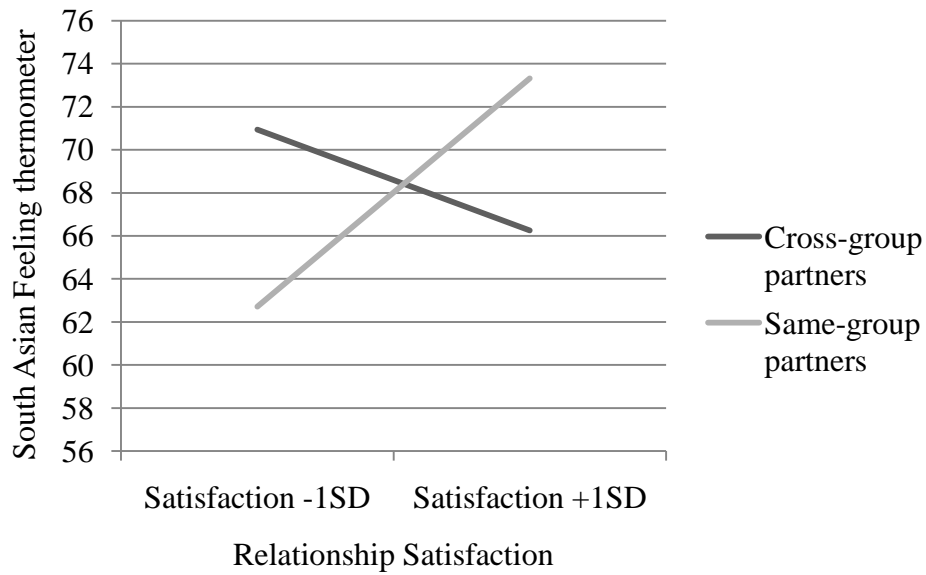


Figure 4.1. Feelings towards South Asians as a function of relationship satisfaction and relationship type.

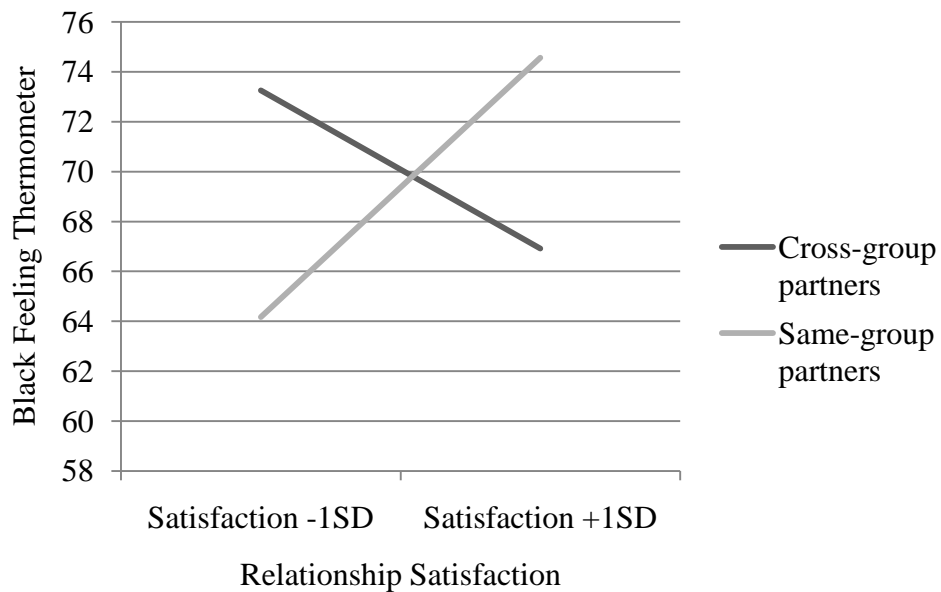


Figure 4.2. Feelings towards Blacks as a function of relationship satisfaction and relationship type.

4.3.3 Cross-group friendships

Although having a cross-group romantic relationship was only correlated with two of the eight intergroup measures, Table 4.2 illustrates that having cross-

group friendships was correlated with all the intergroup measures ($r_s > .16$, $p_s < .03$). To further understand how cross-group friendships predict intergroup attitudes, bootstrapping analyses using 5000 resamples and 95% bias-corrected intervals were conducted (as suggested by Preacher & Hayes, 2008) to examine the mediating effect of intergroup anxiety on the association between cross-group friendships and the intergroup measures. Confidence intervals that do not contain zero denote a significant mediation effect.

Table 4.3 Bootstrap analyses of cross-group friendships on intergroup attitudes via intergroup anxiety

| | Cross-group friendship coefficients | | Anxiety as mediator | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|---------------------|-------------|
| | Total | Direct | Estimate | 95% CI |
| Approval of S. Asian partner | 0.17*** | 0.13** | 0.04(.02) | 0.01/0.08 |
| Approval of Black partner | 0.17*** | 0.14** | 0.03(.02) | 0.01/0.07 |
| S. Asian thermometer | 2.82* | 1.10 | 1.72(.71) | 0.64/3.52 |
| Black thermometer | 3.23* | 1.98 | 1.25(.58) | 0.35/2.67 |
| Positive affect | 0.39*** | 0.24** | 0.15(.06) | 0.05/0.29 |
| Threats | -0.32*** | -0.15 | -0.18(.06) | -0.32/-0.07 |
| Other-group orientation | 0.45*** | 0.19*** | 0.06(.02) | 0.02/0.10 |
| Social dominance orientation | -0.21** | -0.10 | -0.11(.04) | -0.20/-0.04 |

Note. Estimates (standard errors in parentheses) are based on 5000 resamples.

CI = Confidence interval.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 4.3 illustrates the total, direct, and indirect effects of cross-group friendships on the intergroup measures via intergroup anxiety. As all confidence intervals excluded zero, intergroup anxiety mediated the effect of cross-group friendships on the eight intergroup measures. Full mediation occurred on the Black and South Asian thermometers, threat perceptions, and social dominance orientation, as the significant total effect of cross-group friendships was reduced to non-significance when controlling for intergroup anxiety (direct effect column in Table 4.3). Partial mediation occurred on the other-group orientation, positive affect, and the approval of cross-group relationships with a South Asian person and Black person measures as the direct effect of cross-group friendships remained significant when controlling for intergroup anxiety.

A path analysis illustrating the partial and full mediation effects of cross-group friendships via intergroup anxiety on the intergroup measures is presented in Figure 4.3. The model fits the data well, $\chi^2(4) = 1.69$, $p = .15$, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .06 and explained between 8% (approval of ingroup member with South Asian) and 53% (other-group orientation) of the variance in the intergroup measures, highlighting that cross-group friendships, via reduced intergroup anxiety, significantly predict intergroup attitudes.

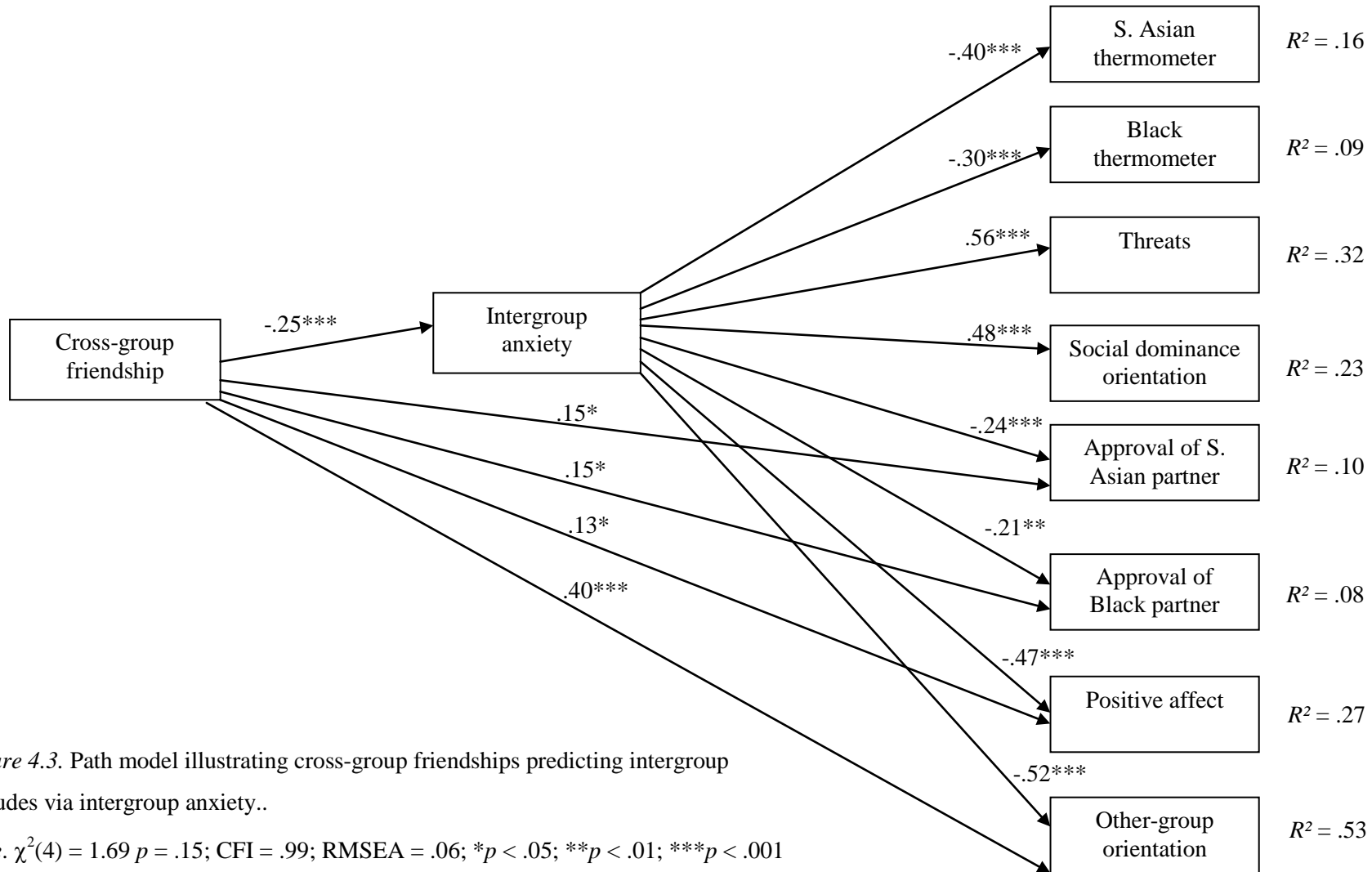


Figure 4.3. Path model illustrating cross-group friendships predicting intergroup attitudes via intergroup anxiety..

Note. $\chi^2(4) = 1.69$ $p = .15$; CFI = .99; RMSEA = .06; $*p < .05$; $**p < .01$; $***p < .001$

4.4 Discussion

The present study investigated the interpersonal perceptions and intergroup attitudes associated with having a romantic relationship with an outgroup member. Using White participants in the UK, the study revealed that cross-group partners perceived greater disapproval towards their relationships than same-group partners; however, this lack of support did not appear to be associated with the relationship quality of cross-group partners. Moreover, examining the intergroup attitudes of individuals involved in cross-group romantic relationships, the study found that cross-group partners reported spending a greater amount of time with cross-group friends and a greater willingness to engage in intergroup contact. Contrary to the hypotheses, however, cross-group partners did not exhibit any more (or less) positive intergroup attitudes than same-group partners. These findings are particularly surprising because a related form of intimate intergroup contact, cross-group friendship, was found to be a strong significant predictor of positive intergroup attitudes.

4.4.1 Interpersonal perceptions

Consistent with previous research in different countries (e.g., Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Levin et al., 2007; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; Uskul et al., 2007), White cross-group partners in the UK perceived greater disapproval of their relationship from society in general and from their own and their partner's networks. These findings suggest that cross-group romantic relationships are still considered to be a social taboo in the UK, with group members preferring same-group relationships to a far greater extent than cross-group relationships (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Miller et al., 2004; Study 1). Although there may be a variety of

reasons for this ingroup preference, including social norms and concerns over status and children (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Miller et al., 2004; Uskul et al., 2007), the consequences of this prevailing ingroup preference may also have various consequences for the partners involved (e.g., Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006).

One possible consequence of this disapproval is the impact it can have on the quality of the relationship (Felmlee, 2001). As social network support is a recognised factor in promoting healthy, satisfying, enduring relationships, lacking this support may predict unsatisfying and uncommitted relationships (Etcheverry et al., 2008; Felmlee, 2001; Sprecher & Felmlee, 2000). However, despite cross-group partners encountering greater opposition to their relationships, there was no difference in the reported relationship quality of cross-group and same-group partners. Optimistically, this may suggest that consistent with the Romeo and Juliet (e.g., Driscoll et al., 1972) and compensation hypothesis (e.g., Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006), cross-group romantic relationships have unique qualities that buffer against friend and familial negativity and allow their relationships to thrive (see section 2.4.1 for further discussion).

Nevertheless, the disapproval cross-group couples encounter may also have a negative impact on their relationships. Specifically, in this study 63% of cross-group partners reported on a past relationship compared to 30% of same-group partners. Consistent with interpersonal research highlighting disapproval as a strong predictor of relationship dissolution (Felmlee, 2001; Sprecher & Felmlee, 2000) and Levin et al.'s (2007) argument that network disapproval inhibits the establishment and maintenance of cross-group romantic relationships after college, it is conceivable that the disapproval cross-group partners encountered during their relationship accounted for the higher proportion of past cross-group relationships relative to same-group relationships in this study. However, as this was not a longitudinal

study, only future studies can determine whether the disapproval encountered by cross-group couples make them stronger and more resilient (e.g., Driscoll et al., 1972; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006), or whether the obstacles they face account for their higher dissolution rates (e.g., Sprecher & Felmlee, 2000).

4.4.2 Intergroup attitudes

In addition to examining cross-group partners' perceptions of their relationships, this study also revealed unique and interesting intergroup attitudes associated with this intimate form of intergroup contact. In support of previous research, cross-group partners reported a greater willingness to engage in intergroup contact (Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998) and reported spending significantly more time with outgroup friends than same-group partners (Levin et al. 2007). Superficially, this would seem to imply that cross-group partners have positive intergroup attitudes and enjoy cross-group contact.

Examining the other intergroup measures, however, suggests that cross-group partners were as ambivalent in their intergroup attitudes as same-group partners. Cross-group partners did not differ from same-group partners in their approval of other ingroup members having a cross-group romantic relationship, in their general feelings towards two outgroups, in the affect and threats they felt toward South Asians, in their intergroup anxiety, or in their overall belief and acceptance of group based discrimination (SDO). These findings indicate that although cross-group partners may have, and be more willing to have, greater intergroup contact, having a romantic relationship with an outgroup member is not associated with positive intergroup attitudes.

The seemingly contradictory finding that cross-group partners engage in and want greater intergroup contact yet do not report more positive intergroup attitudes

than same-group partners is starkly contrasted by the finding that cross-group friendships are particularly powerful at predicting positive intergroup attitudes. Similar to numerous previous studies, cross-group friendships, mediated by reduced intergroup anxiety, was found to predict positive intergroup attitudes on all of the intergroup measures (e.g., Davies et al., 2011; Pettigrew, 1997, 1998; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a). These results not only corroborate Pettigrew's (1997) claim that cross-group friendships are of special importance in improving intergroup attitudes, they also indicate that cross-group romantic relationships and cross-group friendships are distinct forms of intergroup contact which predict distinct intergroup attitudes. Importantly, as the two forms of intimate contact were also found to be highly correlated with one another but did not predict the same intergroup outcomes, it also suggests that some aspect of cross-group romantic relationships may blunt the positive effects of intimate cross-group contact.

4.4.3 Why the ambivalent intergroup attitudes?

To understand why cross-group romantic relationships were not associated with positive intergroup attitudes, I investigated six relationship factors that could potentially moderate the association between cross-group romantic contact and intergroup attitudes. Specifically, I investigated whether relationship disapproval, status (past vs. current), satisfaction, investment, alternatives, and commitment was associated with cross-group partners' intergroup attitudes but found no evidence that any of these important relationship factors predicted cross-group partners' intergroup attitudes. I did, however, unexpectedly find that same-group partners who rated themselves as more satisfied with their relationship rated South Asian and Black people more favourably than same-group partners who were less satisfied with their relationship. Although this finding was not foreseen nor thoroughly

investigated, it could be argued that people who are more satisfied with their relationship, and are unburdened by the disapproval of others, are generally happier people who are able to view others in a more favourable light and so report more general warmth to others (e.g., Lount, 2010). However, as this finding was not an aim of the current study, future research could explore how satisfaction in same-group relationships is associated with attitudes towards other people.

Despite finding no evidence that relationship factors moderate cross-group partners' intergroup attitudes, there still seems to be something unique about romantic cross-group contact that inhibits positive intergroup consequences from occurring. It could be possible, for example, that the lack of power in the study (only 59 cross-group partners) contributed to the null findings for moderation, and that one, or all, the relationship factors may predict cross-group partners' intergroup attitudes. Another explanation, however, could be that other processes not examined in this current research negate the effect of this form of intimate cross-group contact on intergroup attitudes. I now turn my attention to a few of these possible mechanisms.

4.4.3.1 Categorisation

To ensure positive feelings towards one member of an outgroup generalises to other outgroup members, group memberships need to be salient at some point (Hewstone & R. Brown, 1986; Pettigrew, 1998). As romantic relationships are particularly intimate and therefore interpersonal, cross-group partners may not think of their partners in terms of their group membership but may see them only as an individual. This decategorisation and disregard for group memberships may subsequently inhibit any positive feelings felt towards the outgroup partner generalising to the rest of the outgroup (Hewstone & R. Brown, 1986). However, as

cross-group partners will undoubtedly experience moments when their different group memberships are made salient (Gurung & Duong, 1999), this explanation is not without its limitations.

4.4.3.2 Typicality

A further issue with cross-group romantic relationships which may blunt the positive feelings towards romantic outgroup partners from generalising is the perceived typicality of the outgroup partner (e.g., R. Brown & Hewstone, 2005). When people form romantic relationships, they tend to believe their partner is special and unique (Sprecher & Metts, 1999). Although this uniqueness is integral to believing that the exclusive romantic partner is “the one”, it likely hampers the ability to generalise the positive feelings towards the partner to the rest of the outgroup. For example, when individuals believe that their partner is unique they automatically differentiate that person from everybody else. Consequently, to maintain their partner’s uniqueness, they do not attribute their partner’s positive qualities to the rest of the group. This particular form of subtyping, then, suggests that the positive contact they have with their romantic partner may not generalise to attitudes towards the whole group.

Nevertheless, although typicality is an important factor in the generalisation of positive interpersonal contact to intergroup attitudes (R. Brown & Hewstone, 2005), it is not entirely sufficient to explain the findings from this study. Notably, in addition to having cross-group romantic contact, cross-group partners also indicated that they spend a lot of time with outgroup friends. First, this implies that although they could view their outgroup partner as atypical because of their intimate relationship, it would be more difficult to view all of their outgroup friends as atypical group members solely down to the number of them. More importantly,

cross-group friendships were consistently found to be associated with positive intergroup attitudes, yet cross-group partners, despite having cross-group friendships did not report positive intergroup attitudes. This suggests that it may not be the atypicality of the romantic partner or friendships that inhibits positive intergroup outcomes but some other unique quality of the romantic relationship.

4.4.3.3 Anxiety in romantic relationships

From the initial encounter to the very first kiss, romantic relationships can be fraught with anxious moments and nerve-racking situations (Regan, Shen, De La Peña, & Gossett, 2007). Arguably, one of the most anxious moments in a romantic relationship is meeting a partner's family and friends. For cross-group partners this can be an especially anxious situation considering that cross-group partners are well aware that their relationships are disapproved of by their partner's network (e.g. Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006). From an intergroup perspective, this disapproval not only heightens anxiety for the cross-group partners, but it also increases group saliency as the disapproval is usually based on the reasoning that the partners are from different groups (e.g., Miller et al., 2004). This combination of anxiety and group saliency suggests that meeting a cross-group partner's network may lead to stifled interactions which subsequently lead to unpleasant experiences which negatively impact upon attitudes (e.g., Stephan & Stephan, 1985). As cross-group partners have lower intergroup anxiety and positive intergroup attitudes prior to the formation of their relationships (Levin et al., 2007), this increased anxiety and related negative attitudes caused by meeting the outgroup partner's network may serve to nullify these existing positive attitudes.

Supporting this theorising, Levin et al. (2007) found that White participants' cross-group dating at college did not subsequently influence their intergroup

anxiety. Furthermore, in this study, there was no difference between cross-group and same-group partners' level of intergroup anxiety, though cross-group friendships, which are scrutinised and disapproved of to a lesser extent by family and friends (Miller et al., 2004), did predict reduced intergroup anxiety and positive intergroup attitudes. This suggests that cross-group romantic partners, but not cross-group friends, encounter situations in which their intergroup anxiety is either heightened or is inhibited from being reduced as one might expect based on earlier intergroup contact research (e.g., Stephan & Stephan, 1985).

4.5 Limitations and future directions

The findings and implications from the current study provide interesting suggestions for future research to investigate. First, as a cross-sectional study it was impossible to determine causality in the present research. Based on prior longitudinal research, I assumed that cross-group partners held positive intergroup attitudes at the start of the relationship (e.g., Levin et al., 2007) and that their experience in a cross-group romantic relationship blunted these positive attitudes. Nevertheless, one unconfirmed theoretical explanation for why individuals enter into cross-group romantic relationships is to control or take revenge on the outgroup (e.g., Porterfield, 1982). Although this reasoning goes against a great deal of interpersonal research which finds that cross-group partners enter into relationships for the same reasons as same-group partners (e.g., Gurung & Duong, 1999; Levin et al., 2007), this alternative reasoning suggests that cross-group romantic relationships do not blunt or negate positive intergroup outcomes, but that partners hold negative attitudes prior to their relationships. Future longitudinal research could determine whether cross-group partners' attitudes change as a consequence of intergroup romantic contact, thereby providing further support for the assumptions of the

current study, or whether cross-group partners hold ambivalent or negative attitudes prior to the formation of their relationship.

Along with determining whether attitude change does occur, longitudinal research would also help to reveal when and why cross-group partners' intergroup attitudes are influenced. Specifically, although I explored the potential moderating roles of several important factors (relationship status, quality and disapproval), other factors which were beyond the scope of the current could also be explored. For example, the categorisation and the perceived typicality of the outgroup partner may restrict attitudes from generalising. In addition, the extent to which cross-group partners experience intergroup anxiety when meeting their partner's network could also be examined as having a potentially negative impact on intergroup attitudes.

As relationship transitions, such as engagements and marriage, can impact upon the approval of the relationship and impact on the liking of partner's networks (Sprecher & Feinlee, 2000), another possible avenue for future longitudinal research is to examine how certain stages in romantic relationships can influence intergroup attitudes. For example, research could investigate how different types of relationships (dating vs. co-habiting vs. engaged vs. marriage vs. children) and the related escalation of intimacy could impact upon intergroup attitudes. Furthermore, this type of longitudinal research could also investigate how a break up, along with the commonly associated severing of social ties, influences the intergroup attitudes of the partners (e.g., Sprecher & Feinlee, 2000).

Research could also explore how different groups and different compositions of romantic relationships influence intergroup attitudes. For example, due to practical reasons, I only used White participants in this study. Although much can be learned from examining White participants experiences and attitudes, it is evident that different groups experience cross-group romantic relationships differently (e.g.,

Levin et al., 2007; Uskul et al., 2007). By assessing the intergroup outcomes for the different groups in the UK, a fuller understanding of the broader consequences of these relationships would be gained.

Further to this point, due to the wide variety of cross-group partners identified in this study, I was unable to investigate how specific cross-group romantic relationships influence intergroup attitudes. For example, the most frequently reported cross-group relationships were between White participants and South Asian partners and Black partners ($ns = 14$). Though it is likely that different types of cross-group romantic relationships influence intergroup attitudes (e.g., Levin et al., 2007), the relative small numbers of specific dyads in this study made it difficult to investigate how these different group memberships influence intergroup attitudes. Future research is necessary to establish not only how different group partners experience cross-group romantic relationships but how different combinations of group partners influence intergroup attitudes.

Other important characteristics of cross-group partners that could be investigated in future studies are the age and gender of the partners. While I attempted to recruit a balanced sample, only 20% of the sample were male and only 20% were over 25 years old. Gaining a more representative sample would enable analyses into possible gender differences (e.g., Miller et al., 2004) and to uncover whether the age and different life stages of the partners has an influence on their attitudes (e.g., Levin et al., 2007).

4.6 Summary

The current research demonstrated that cross-group partners encounter greater disapproval towards their relationships than same-group partners. Moreover, the research also indicated that direct cross-group romantic contact is not associated

with the positive intergroup attitudes found with other forms of intimate cross-group contact (e.g., Pettigrew, 1997; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). These results suggest that there is something unique about cross-group romantic relationships which may inhibit positive intergroup attitudes from developing. Expanding on these direct intergroup contact findings, the next chapter aims to investigate how extended contact with these relationships predicts the intergroup attitudes of others.

Chapter 5

Extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships

As illustrated in the previous chapters, most individuals do not enter into romantic relationships with outgroup members (e.g., Allport, 1954; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Miller et al., 2004; Office for National Statistics, 2005; Study 1; Study 2; W. Wang, 2012). Despite this lack of direct cross-group romantic contact, however, the growing number of cross-group romantic relationships in society (McFadden, 2001; W. Wang, 2012) together with the increasing number of portrayals of cross-group couples in the media (Bramlett-Solomon, 2007) suggests that individuals are increasingly likely to know, have learnt about, or observed, a member of their own group in a romantic relationship with an outgroup member. According to extended contact theory, this vicarious contact may have important implications for intergroup attitudes, intergroup relations, and even interpersonal choices (e.g., L. Cameron et al., 2011; De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; Du Toit & Quayle, 2011; Paolini et al., 2007; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997).

To recap, extended contact theory proposes that knowing an ingroup member in a close relationship with an outgroup member will improve intergroup attitudes and encourage further intergroup contact (Wright et al., 1997). This association is mediated by both perceived ingroup and outgroup norms (L. Cameron et al., 2011; De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997). That is, extended contact improves intergroup attitudes and encourages further intergroup contact because it shows individuals that intergroup contact not only occurs, but that the contact is endorsed by both the ingroup and outgroup, and that there is no

punishment or exclusion from the groups for engaging in such contact (see sections 1.3 and 1.4.3.2 for further discussion).

Recognising that romantic relationships are ‘close relationships’ (e.g., Hatfield & Rapson, 1996) implies that knowing an ingroup member involved in a romantic relationship with an outgroup member will also have the same positive effects. Indeed, Study 1 revealed that when individuals know of an ingroup member who shares a romantic relationship with a South Asian partner, they are more likely to report that they would personally date, have a romantic relationship, and have a child with a South Asian partner (see section 3.5.4). Combining these results with extended contact theory suggests that extended contact with a cross-group romantic partner promotes positive intergroup attitudes and encourages further intergroup contact because the relationships illustrate to other ingroup members the interpersonal benefits of engaging in such contact and the acceptability of such intergroup contact.

Nevertheless, as indicated by the findings of Study 2 and other research, cross-group romantic relationships are considered to be norm violations and encounter disapproval and discrimination from both groups (Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Miller et al., 2004; Study 1; Study 2). The perceived unacceptability and negative perceptions of such relationships may impede upon the positive outcomes associated with extended contact with this form of intergroup contact. Indeed, similar to Study 2 in which having a cross-group romantic relationship was associated with ambivalent intergroup attitudes, it is possible that extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship may predict positive intergroup attitudes but these attitudes may be nullified by the negative norms, perceptions, and reactions against these relationships.

5.1 Study 3

In the current study, I investigate the intergroup attitudes and interpersonal perceptions associated with having extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship. By comparing individuals who have had extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship with individuals who have had no such contact, I examine how cross-group romantic relationships are perceived and how contact with these relationships are associated with intergroup attitudes and relations. Consistent with previous interpersonal research, I expect that cross-group partners will be perceived as encountering greater disapproval of their relationships than same-group partners (e.g., Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Levin et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2004; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; Study 1; Study 2). As disapproval can impinge upon perceived relationship quality, I also expect that the increased disapproval cross-group partners encounter will predict their relationships being perceived as of lower quality than same-group relationships (Etcheverry & Agnew, 2004; Felmlee, 2001; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2007; Sprecher & Felmlee, 2000).

In support of previous research on extended contact, I further expect that knowing someone in a cross-group romantic relationship will predict positive intergroup attitudes (e.g., Study 1; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997). Compared to individuals who have not had extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship, individuals who know an ingroup member with an outgroup partner will perceive more approval to have such a relationship, and these positive norms, in turn, will be associated with positive attitudes towards own cross-group dating behaviour, which will further generalise to more favourable attitudes towards the outgroup and cross-group contact in general (e.g., Pettigrew, 1998). Nevertheless, as the results from Study 2 highlight, there is also the possibility that

extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships might not be associated with positive intergroup attitudes. Notably, the increased disapproval towards these relationships may nullify the positive intergroup attitudes associated with this form of intergroup contact.

5.2 Method

5.2.1 Participants

Ninety-nine White British participants aged 18 to 24 years (12 males and 87 females) completed an online study in exchange for class credit at the University of Leeds.

5.2.2 Measures

5.2.2.1 Extended romantic contact/relationship type

Participants indicated if they knew an ingroup member (White British person) in a cross-group romantic relationship. This measure was used to indicate relationship type for the interpersonal measures (*same-group* vs. *cross-group*) and to indicate extended contact for the intergroup measures (*no* vs. *yes*). Twenty-five participants had extended contact with a cross-group relationship involving an ingroup member and a South Asian partner and 74 participants had no extended contact and completed questions assessing a White British same-group romantic relationship. The White British with South Asian relationship was chosen as South Asian people are the largest non-mixed minority ethnic group in England and Wales (4% of population; Office for National Statistics, 2005) and the preliminary results from Study 1 suggest that extended contact with romantic relationships involving South Asians may predict greater openness to cross-group dating (see section 3.5.4).

5.2.2.2 Interpersonal measures

Perceived approval of relationship. Participants indicated to what extent they thought both partners' friends and families approve of the specific relationship (1 = *very much disapprove* to 7 = *very much approve*), in addition to how much overall encouragement they receive to continue with their relationship (1 = *lots of discouragement* to 7 = *lots of encouragement*, adapted from Social Network Approval; Felmlee, 2001; $\alpha = .87$).

Relationship quality. Participants completed a modified version of the Investment Scale described in section 4.2.2.2 (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Rusbult, 1980). The scale was adapted from the original and re-worded to assess the perceived relationship quality of the ingroup partner they knew best. For example, "I feel satisfied with our relationship" was reworded to "They feel satisfied with their relationship". Reliability coefficients for the scales were as follows; Satisfaction $\alpha = .85$; Investment $\alpha = .90$; Alternatives $\alpha = .74$; Commitment $\alpha = .93$.

5.2.2.3 Intergroup measures

Perceived ingroup norms. Participants reported to what extent they believed their parents and friends would approve if they were to date a South Asian person ($r = .81$) and a White person ($r = .92$; 1 = *Disapprove a great deal* to 7 = *Approve a great deal*; adapted from Miller et al., 2004). Perceived ingroup norms towards cross-group dating was then calculated by subtracting the approval of same-group dating from the approval of cross-group dating. Higher scores indicate more positive perceived norms towards cross-group dating.

Own attitudes towards cross-group relationships. Participants indicated how strongly they favoured or opposed a variety of ingroup members (parent, sibling, distant relative, same ethnicity friend, same ethnicity acquaintance) having a

romantic relationship with two different outgroup members; a South Asian partner ($\alpha = .94$), and a Black partner ($\alpha = .94$; 1 = *Strongly oppose* to 5 = *Strongly favour*; adapted from Golebiowska, 2007). In addition, participants also reported how easy they found it to imagine themselves in a cross-group romantic relationship (1 = *Extremely difficult* to 7 = *Extremely easy*; Lewandowski & Jackson, 2001), and if they had ever been in a relationship lasting a month or more with a South Asian partner (*Yes/No*).

Outgroup Affect. As in Study 2, positive affect toward South Asian people in general was measured by 3 items ($\alpha = .89$): to what extent participants like South Asian people, experience positive feelings toward South Asian people and feel happiness toward South Asian people (0 = *Not at all* to 9 = *Extremely*; Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005).

Other-group orientation. Participants completed the 6 item construct measuring the willingness and interest to engage in social contact with people of different ethnic groups. Scale items are described in section 3.4.2.3 ($\alpha = .79$; Phinney, 1992).

Cross-group friendships. In attempt to isolate the unique effects of extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship, participants indicated their contact with cross-group friends; “In my circle of friends there are people who are of a different ethnicity to me” (1 = *Very rarely or never*, 2 = *Rarely*, 3 = *More often than rarely*, 4 = *Often*, 5 = *Very often*; Groweic, 2007).

5.3 Results

Due to the high correlation between cross-group friendships and extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship ($r = .29, p = .003$), in addition to cross-group friendships powerful association with intergroup attitudes (e.g., Davies

et al., 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), I have omitted cross-group friendships from the subsequent analyses. As the inclusion of cross-group friendships in the analyses obscures the effects of extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship, the omission of this measure will allow me to identify the effects of cross-group romantic relationships on intergroup attitudes. Such a strategy was also employed by Du Toit and Quayle (2011) but I acknowledge this may hamper any conclusions drawn from this study and address those issues in section 5.5.

To examine the interpersonal perceptions and intergroup attitudes associated with extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships, I first use independent *t*-tests to compare the interpersonal and intergroup responses of participants who know of a cross-group romantic relationship to those participants who have not had extended contact with a cross-group relationship. Following these initial analyses, I use bootstrapping analyses to examine the predicted mediating role of perceived disapproval on the relationship quality measures and the mediating role of perceived ingroup norms towards cross-group dating on the intergroup measures. Finally, using the mediational analyses as a foundation, I develop a path model which simultaneously examines how cross-group romantic relationships are perceived and how extended contact with such a relationship is associated with intergroup attitudes.

5.3.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 5.1 illustrates the correlations for all participants' responses collapsed across groups. The interpersonal variables (2-6) are highly correlated with one another and the intergroup variables (7-13), apart from own cross-group dating, are highly correlated with one another. The interpersonal and intergroup measures,

however, do not significantly correlate with one another, except for commitment which is correlated with the approval of others dating a South Asian partner.

Table 5.1 Correlations of all variables collapsed across groups

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|--|---|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|-------|--------|--------|--------|------|--------|--------|
| 1. Relationship type | - | -.43*** | -.24* | -.33*** | .21* | -.17 | .23** | .24* | .23* | .20* | -.03 | .28** | .22* |
| 2. Relationship approval | | - | .68*** | .62*** | -.37*** | .52*** | .05 | .04 | -.03 | -.04 | -.04 | .01 | .00 |
| 3. Satisfaction | | | - | .62*** | -.38*** | .74*** | .08 | .09 | .01 | -.03 | -.01 | .08 | .00 |
| 4. Investment | | | | - | -.36*** | .71*** | -.02 | .10 | .10 | .01 | .01 | -.03 | .00 |
| 5. Alternatives | | | | | - | -.45*** | -.02 | -.18 | -.15 | .05 | -.02 | -.04 | -.06 |
| 6. Commitment | | | | | | - | .06 | .21* | .16 | .08 | -.04 | .14 | .05 |
| 7. Perceived ingroup norms | | | | | | | - | .49*** | .45*** | .44*** | .10 | .42*** | .36*** |
| 8. Approval of S. Asian partner | | | | | | | | - | .94*** | .46*** | .12 | .51*** | .43*** |
| 9. Approval of Black partner | | | | | | | | | - | .47*** | .09 | .45*** | .40*** |
| 10. Ease of imagining self in cross-group dating | | | | | | | | | | - | .21* | .36*** | .52*** |
| 11. Own cross-group dating | | | | | | | | | | | - | .12 | .12 |
| 12. Positive outgroup affect | | | | | | | | | | | | - | .57*** |
| 13. Other-group orientation | | | | | | | | | | | | | - |

Note. Relationship type coded so that 1 = cross-group relationship and extended contact, 0 = same-group relationship and no extended contact.

Items 2 – 7 relate to participants perceptions.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 5.2 displays and compares the responses of participants who know a cross-group relationship (extended contact) and those who only know a same-group relationship (no extended contact).

Table 5.2 Descriptive statistics and independent *t*-tests between relationship types

| | Cross-group | Same-group | Independent |
|--|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | <i>M (SD)</i> | <i>M (SD)</i> | <i>t</i> -test |
| Relationship approval | 5.11 (1.14) | 6.20 (0.94) | -4.72*** |
| Satisfaction | 6.19 (1.51) | 7.11 (1.69) | -2.43* |
| Investment | 5.86 (2.02) | 7.24 (1.66) | -3.40*** |
| Alternatives | 4.56 (1.67) | 3.66 (1.86) | 2.14* |
| Commitment | 6.74 (1.76) | 7.45 (1.87) | -1.66 |
| Perceived ingroup norms | -2.84 (3.52) | -4.77 (3.57) | 2.35* |
| Approval of S. Asian partner | 3.57 (0.86) | 3.11 (0.81) | 2.42* |
| Approval of Black partner | 3.64 (0.81) | 3.20 (0.82) | 2.33* |
| Ease of imagining self in cross-group relationship | 4.72 (1.99) | 3.85 (1.86) | 1.98* |
| Own cross-group dating | 0.04 (0.20) | 0.05 (0.23) | -0.28 |
| Positive outgroup affect | 6.27 (1.51) | 5.22 (1.62) | 2.86** |
| Other-group orientation | 3.35 (0.47) | 3.09 (0.52) | 2.18* |

Note. ‘Approval of S. Asian partner’ and ‘Approval of Black partner’ refer to participant’s approval of five ingroup members having a romantic relationship with South Asian partners and Black partners, respectively.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

As illustrated in Table 5.2, ingroup members in cross-group romantic relationships were perceived to encounter greater disapproval, to be less satisfied, less invested into, and have more alternatives to their relationships than same-group partners. However, there was no significant difference in the perceived commitment of the partners, which was therefore dropped from subsequent analyses.

In addition, participants who had extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship, compared to participants who had no such contact (same-group relationship), perceived greater ingroup approval of cross-group dating, were more approving of other ingroup members dating a South Asian partner and a Black partner, found it easier to imagine themselves in a cross-group relationship, had more positive attitudes towards South Asian people as a group, and more positive attitudes to intergroup contact in general. Notably, there were only five participants in the sample who had themselves ever dated a South Asian partner, with no differences between the two groups on this variable.

5.3.2 Mediation analyses

To test the mediational role of perceived relationship approval on perceived relationship quality, and the mediational role of perceived ingroup norms on intergroup attitudes, I performed the bootstrapping technique using 5000 resamples and 95% bias-corrected intervals as suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2008). Confidence intervals that do not contain zero reveal a significant mediation effect. As illustrated by Table 5.3, both of the study's mediational predictions were supported. Consistent with expectations, ingroup members in cross-group romantic relationships were perceived to have lower quality relationships (e.g., less satisfied, less invested, and more alternatives) than same-group partners, associations that were fully mediated by lower perceived approval of the relationships. Furthermore,

extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship was associated with the five intergroup measures (approval of ingroup members dating a South Asian partner, a Black partner, ease of imagining self in a cross-group relationship, attitudes towards South Asians as a whole, and other-group orientation), and these associations were significantly mediated by perceived ingroup approval of cross-group dating.

Table 5.3 Bootstrapping analyses of how extended contact with cross-group couples predicts interpersonal perceptions and intergroup attitudes

| Mediator-Criterion | Total | Direct | Point estimate | 95% CI |
|--|----------|--------|----------------|-------------|
| <u>Relationship approval</u> | | | | |
| Satisfaction | -0.93*** | 0.26 | -1.18(.30) | -1.87/-0.66 |
| Investment | -1.38*** | -0.31 | -1.07(.32) | -1.73/-0.49 |
| Alternatives | 0.90* | 0.28 | 0.62(.24) | 0.22/1.17 |
| <u>Perceived ingroup norms</u> | | | | |
| Approval of S.Asian partner | 0.46* | 0.26 | 0.20(.10) | 0.03/0.42 |
| Approval of Black partner | 0.44* | 0.26 | 0.19(.10) | 0.03/0.41 |
| Ease of imaging self in cross-group relationship | 0.87* | 0.45 | 0.42(.21) | 0.06/0.86 |
| Other-group orientation | 0.26* | 0.17 | 0.09(.05) | 0.01/0.20 |
| Positive outgroup affect | 1.05** | 0.73* | 0.32(.17) | 0.06/0.72 |

Note. Estimates (standard errors in parentheses) are based on 5000 resamples.

CI = Confidence intervals.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

5.3.3 Exploratory path model

Due to the significant mediational findings, I went on to test a path model using AMOS 17.0 (Arbuckle, 2008; Figure 5.1). The tested model simultaneously explored how knowing a cross-group romantic relationship was associated with the interpersonal measures via perceived approval (upper portion of Figure 5.1) and how extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship predicted the intergroup measures via perceived ingroup norms towards cross-group dating (lower portion of Figure 5.1). In the tested model, relationship type was dummy coded (same-group relationship/no extended contact = 0, cross-group relationship/extended contact = 1).

Using Hu and Bentler's (1999) guidelines, the proposed model fit the data well. The chi square test was non significant, $\chi^2(31, N = 99) = 31.98, p = .42$; the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) was below .06 (RMSEA = .02), and the comparative fit index (CFI) was over .95 (CFI = .99), though the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was not lower than the specified value of .08 (SRMR = .09).

As illustrated by Figure 5.1, ingroup members in cross-group relationships were perceived to receive less approval of their relationship ($\gamma = -.43, p < .001$) which, in turn, was associated with the perceived satisfaction ($\beta = .67, p < .001$), perceived investment ($\beta = .63, p < .001$), and perceived alternatives of the partner ($\beta = -.37, p < .001$). Relationship type (same-group vs. cross-group) mediated by the perceived approval of the relationship predicted 45% of the variance in the perceived satisfaction, 40% of the variance in the perceived investment, and 14% of the variance in the perceived alternatives to the relationship. Furthermore, relationship type (exemplifying extended contact) was associated with greater perceived ingroup approval of cross-group dating ($\gamma = .23, p < .05$) which, in turn, was associated with the approval of ingroup members dating a South Asian partner

($\beta = .49, p < .001$), the approval of ingroup members dating a Black partner ($\beta = .45, p < .001$), the ease at imagining self in a cross-group relationship ($\beta = .44, p < .001$), positive outgroup affect ($\beta = .42, p < .001$), and a greater other-group orientation ($\beta = .36, p < .001$). Of further interest, extended contact – mediated by perceived ingroup approval of cross-group dating – accounted for 24% of the variance in the approval of ingroup members dating a South Asian partner, 20% of the variance in the approval of ingroup members dating a Black partner, 19% of the variance in the ease at imagining self in a cross-group relationship, 17% of the variance in the positive outgroup affect, and 13% of the variance in other-group orientation.

As the path model was exploratory, I also assessed models in which relationship type was allowed to directly predict each dependent variable in turn. No significant direct paths were found (all paths, $p > .20$) and the addition of the direct paths did not significantly improve the fit of the model (all models, $\chi^2_d(1) < 1.72, ps > .19$).

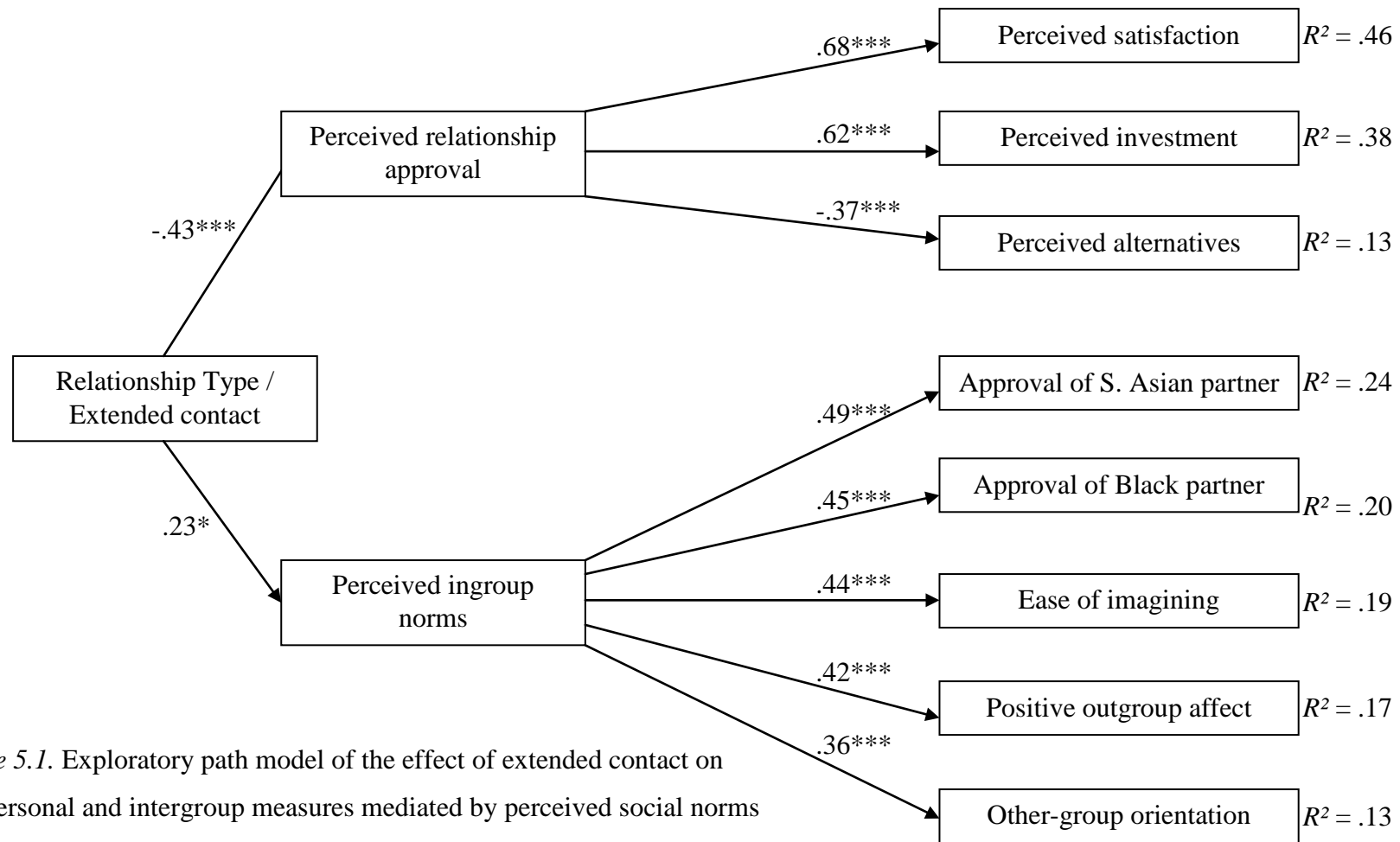


Figure 5.1. Exploratory path model of the effect of extended contact on interpersonal and intergroup measures mediated by perceived social norms
Note. $N = 99$; Coefficients are standardized. $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$.

5.4 Discussion

The present study integrated the intergroup relations and interpersonal relationships literatures to investigate how cross-group romantic relationships are perceived and how extended contact with these intimate relationships are associated with intergroup attitudes. Consistent with predictions, ingroup members' cross-group romantic relationships were perceived to encounter greater levels of disapproval than same-group relationships which, in turn, negatively predicted the perceived quality of these relationships. Knowing a cross-group romantic relationship, however, was positively associated with participants' intergroup attitudes and relations. Notably, having extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship was associated with greater perceived approval from the ingroup to date an outgroup member which, in turn, predicted more positive attitudes towards cross-group dating and more positive intergroup attitudes in general.

5.4.1 Interpersonal perceptions

Ingroup members in cross-group romantic relationships were perceived to encounter greater friend and familial disapproval of their relationship than ingroup members in same-group relationships. Without the approval and support of their social networks, cross-group partners were perceived to be less satisfied with, less invested into, and perceived to have more appealing alternatives to their relationship than same-group partners. These findings support previous research and illustrate that cross-group couples not only encounter more opposition to their relationship than same-group couples but that this opposition, representing the social norms against cross-group relationships, places greater strain on the relationship which

subsequently reduces the perceived quality of the relationship (e.g., Felmlee, 2001; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2007; H. Wang et al., 2004).

Nevertheless, despite the negative perceptions in some aspects of relationship quality, there were some encouraging findings for cross-group couples. Firstly, there was no difference in the perceived commitment of the cross-group and same-group partners. This suggests that cross-group couples may be perceived to have other relationship qualities that compensate for their otherwise lower quality relationships to ensure their commitment to one another (Compensation hypothesis: Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; see section 2.4.1 for discussion). Having to overcome familial and friend opposition, for example, may lead to the perception that cross-group couples are devoted and dedicated to their partners and committed to their relationship regardless of the obstacles they may encounter (e.g., Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006).

In addition, knowing an ingroup member in a cross-group romantic relationship predicted greater perceived ingroup approval of cross-group dating. This suggests that as more individuals are entering cross-group romantic relationships (McFadden, 2001; W. Wang, 2012), there will be greater approval towards these relationships. With the erosion of the pervasive endogamy norms, furthermore, the relationships may not encounter the same degree of disapproval and discouragement, consequently enabling the partners to develop high quality relationships unburdened by network disapproval.

Nevertheless, although future studies may capture this gradual transition to increased approval of cross-group romantic relationships, it still remains that in this study as in previous studies, cross-group romantic relationships were perceived to encounter more disapproval and to be of lower quality than same-group relationships (e.g., BBC, 2002; Golebiowska, 2007; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006;

Levin et al., 2007; Miller et al, 2004; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998). This ingroup bias was also evident in participants' perceived approval to enter into relationships. Indeed, as indicated by the perceived ingroup norms in Table 5.2, all participants perceived greater approval to have relationships with White people than South-Asian people. These findings illustrate that perceptions of cross-group romantic relationships remain comparatively negative and cross-group partners continue to be subjected to disapproval and discrimination because of their romantic choices.

5.4.2 Intergroup attitudes

The finding that extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship predicts greater perceived ingroup approval towards cross-group dating is of great interest for the intergroup relations literature. As with other forms of extended contact, the perception of ingroup norms mediated between extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship and intergroup attitudes (e.g., De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; R. N. Turner et al., 2008). Specifically, extended contact, by indicating relatively greater ingroup approval of cross-group dating, predicted more positive attitudes towards other ingroup members dating an outgroup member (both a South Asian partner and a Black partner) and greater ease at imagining the self in a cross-group romantic relationship. Moreover, extended contact via perceived ingroup norms also generalised to more positive attitudes towards the outgroup as a whole, and more willingness and interest to engage in intergroup contact.

In support of extended contact theory, these findings suggest that simply knowing an ingroup member in a romantic relationship with an outgroup member promotes more positive intergroup attitudes, intergroup expectations, and intergroup behaviours. This is important for numerous reasons. On a theoretical level, the findings illustrate that extended contact theory is not only relevant to cross-group

friendships, but is also applicable to cross-group romantic relationships. In addition, as positive attitudes were found to generalise, these findings lend support to the notion that intergroup contact influences specific intergroup attitudes (e.g., attitudes towards cross-group romantic relationships) which then generalise to more general attitudes (e.g., affect towards entire outgroup; Pettigrew, 1997, 1998).

In addition to the theoretical relevance, the findings are important on a practical level. Consistent with a great deal of previous research, the current study illustrated that cross-group relationships are perceived negatively compared to same-group relationships (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Miller et al., 2004; H. Wang et al., 2007). Yet, despite the negative perceptions, having extended contact with a cross-group relationship was associated with more positive intergroup attitudes than having no such contact. This then suggests, that although cross-group relationships remain a norm violation, having contact with the relationships still has a relatively positive effect on intergroup attitudes and relations (e.g., Du Toit & Quayle, 2011). Moreover, as there are an increasing number of cross-group relationships in society and more media portrayals of such couples, there is an increasing likelihood of having extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships. Combined, these findings and trends suggest that as more individuals have extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships, the contact will help to promote positive intergroup attitudes that will benefit society and the partners involved.

5.5 Limitations and future directions

As with all cross-sectional data it is not possible to conclude causation in the relationship between extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship and intergroup attitudes. Although knowing an ingroup member in a cross-group couple

could promote positive intergroup attitudes as suggested in the current study, it is also feasible that having positive intergroup attitudes increases the likelihood of knowing someone in a cross-group relationship.

Nevertheless, research from both the intergroup contact and interpersonal relationships domains indicate that although attitudes do influence contact, extended contact is more likely to exert a greater influence on intergroup attitudes than the reverse (Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Pettigrew, 1997; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a). Previous intergroup contact analyses, for example, have revealed that the path from intergroup contact to intergroup attitudes is stronger than the reverse path, illustrating that contact has a more powerful effect on attitudes than the inverse relationship (e.g., Pettigrew, 1997; R. N. Turner et al., 2007a). Moreover, interpersonal research suggests that although social networks do have an impact on romantic choices (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004), individuals rarely choose who their associates date. As such, it seems more plausible that knowing an ingroup member in a cross-group romantic relationship will improve intergroup attitudes, rather than the alternative which suggests that having positive intergroup attitudes will lead people to seek out ingroup members who are in a cross-group relationship. Nonetheless, future research, particularly longitudinal research investigating extended contact with cross-group relationships may be useful in determining, beyond doubt, the directionality of the relationship between contact and attitudes for this particular form of contact.

Another limitation which impacts upon the current research is the omission of cross-group friendships in the analyses (see section 5.3). As extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships and cross-group friendships correlated highly with one another, the inclusion of both types of relationships obscured the direct association of cross-group romantic relationships with intergroup attitudes. In

order to extrapolate the effect of extended romantic contact, I decided to omit cross-group friendships from the analyses. Doing so, however, may limit the study. An alternative explanation for the study's findings could, for example, be that cross-group friendships, rather than extended romantic contact, predicts positive intergroup attitudes.

Nevertheless, to separate the effects of the two types of contact from one another is extremely difficult in a cross-sectional study. For example, knowing an ingroup member in a cross-group relationship was highly correlated with having cross-group friends. This association, moreover, could indicate that not only do individuals know of a cross-group relationship, they are also friends with both the ingroup and outgroup partners of the couple. This, then, causes an issue of whether the friendship with the outgroup partner, or the knowledge of the cross-group relationship, predicts the positive intergroup effects. To address this limitation, the next chapter presents an experiment in which I manipulate extended contact and examine its influence on intergroup attitudes, controlling for other forms of cross-group contact, including friendships. By doing so, I attempt to experimentally disentangle the intergroup effects of extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships from cross-group friendships; something which is difficult to do cross-sectionally.

As with the previous studies in the thesis, a further limitation of Study 3 which raises questions for future research to explore is its generalisability. As White and South Asians are the two largest ethnic groups in the UK (excluding the mixed-ethnicity group), I chose to focus on cross-group relationships involving only these two ethnic groups. However, as different groups elicit different emotions and threats (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005), future research should examine whether different

combinations of ethnic groups, or even other types of social groups (e.g., interfaith relationships, inter-national relationship) produce similar intergroup influences.

In a similar vein, only White participants were used. As research suggests there can be a distinct difference between the level of intergroup contact and intergroup attitudes of majority and minority ethnic groups (e.g., Levin et al., 2007; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005), future research could examine how individuals from minority social and ethnic groups perceive intergroup dating, and how intergroup dating influences their intergroup attitudes.

5.6 Summary

As more individuals enter into cross-group romantic relationships and there are more portrayals of these couples in the media (e.g., Bramlett-Solomon, 2007; McFadden, 2001; W. Wang, 2012), there is an increasing probability that individuals will have extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship. The current study illustrated that this extended contact has implications for cross-group couples and for intergroup relations in general. For the couples, the findings highlight that their relationships are perceived to encounter greater disapproval than same-group relationships. This disapproval, moreover, contributes to the perception that their relationships are also lower in quality than same-group relationships. Despite these negative interpersonal perceptions, however, extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship is associated with relatively greater normative approval of cross-group romantic contact. These positive ingroup norms, in turn, predict more positive attitudes towards cross-group dating and more positive intergroup attitudes in general.

Taken together, the current findings suggest that although cross-group couples are still burdened by negative perceptions, their relationships help to

promote positive norms towards cross-group romantic contact which improve intergroup attitudes and relations. An implication of this is that as extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships increase, so will the perceived norms towards them, which will not only reduce disapproval towards the relationships, thereby unburdening the couples, the increase in extended contact with this form of intergroup contact will also improve intergroup attitudes and relations, thereby helping to promote a more harmonious society.

Acknowledging that instances of extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships are likely to increase, the next two chapters investigate components of cross-group romantic relationships which may influence how these relationships influence the intergroup attitudes of others. Specifically, two experiments examine how the perceived quality of cross-group romantic relationships and how perceived group norms towards the relationships influence intergroup attitudes. Moreover, recognising the limitation of not including cross-group friendships in the current cross-sectional analyses, I also control for cross-group contact, such as friendships, to experimentally identify to what extent extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship influences intergroup attitudes.

Chapter 6

Quality of extended romantic contact

As extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship becomes ever increasingly likely (McFadden, 2001; W. Wang, 2012), the next two chapters investigate important characteristics of cross-group romantic relationships which may impact upon how extended contact with these relationships influence intergroup outcomes. In recognition of the importance of the quality of intergroup contact (e.g., Allport, 1954; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Prestwich et al., 2008; Voci & Hewstone, 2003; Wilder, 1984), the current chapter presents Study 4 which examines how the perceived quality of cross-group romantic relationships influences intergroup attitudes. Specifically, I examine how having extended contact with a satisfying cross-group relationship compared to a dissatisfying cross-group relationship influences intergroup attitudes.

6.1 Contact quality

The quality of contact between members of different social groups has persistently been recognised as an integral factor impacting upon how intergroup contact influences intergroup outcomes (e.g., Allport, 1954; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Prestwich et al., 2008; Voci & Hewstone, 2003; Wilder, 1984). As discussed in section 1.4.1, high quality interactions promote positive expectations, attitudes and relations, whereas low quality encounters can exacerbate existing tensions and prejudices (e.g., Allport, 1954; Islam & Hewstone, 1993). The quality of cross-group interactions, furthermore, plays an important role

in the outcomes of vicarious intergroup contact (e.g., L. Cameron et al., 2011; De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997). Extended contact with high quality intergroup interactions leads to positive expectations, encourages further intergroup contact, and promotes positive intergroup attitudes. Conversely, if individuals witness awkward, dissatisfying intergroup encounters, they are likely to develop negative expectations and be deterred from engaging in such contact (see section 1.4.1.2 for further discussion).

6.1.1 Extended contact with a satisfying relationship

Although previous research has focused on non-romantic intergroup contact, the finding that contact quality influences intergroup outcomes has important implications for extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships. According to previous research, knowing a healthy, satisfying, cross-group romantic relationship is likely to illustrate to individuals that romantic relationships with outgroup members can be both satisfying and normatively acceptable. This positive exemplar, furthermore, promotes positive intergroup expectancies which, in turn, promote further intergroup contact and positive intergroup attitudes (e.g., R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997). In support of this assertion, Lee and Gudykunst (2001) examined initial attraction in interethnic relationships and found that “if individuals expect that their interactions with members of different ethnic groups will produce positive results, they will be attracted to members of those ethnic groups” (p.377).

Nevertheless, although extended contact with high quality cross-group romantic relationships has the possibility of improving intergroup attitudes and relations, the issue of subtyping may limit the influence of this form of contact (e.g., Wilder, 1984). Cross-group romantic relationships, for example, are generally

perceived to be less satisfying and of lower quality than same-group relationships (Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; Study 3). These negative perceptions, moreover, indicate that a satisfying and positive cross-group romantic relationship may be seen as an “exception to the rule”. As such, the positivity of the relationship may be discounted as a one off anomaly and its influence on intergroup attitudes may be subsequently hampered (see section 1.4.4.1 for further discussion).

6.1.2 Extended contact with a dissatisfying relationship

In addition to subtyping, the general negative perceptions of cross-group romantic relationships may also impact upon intergroup attitudes by exemplifying negative intergroup contact. Indeed, as cross-group romantic relationships are generally considered to be less satisfying than same-group romantic relationships (Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; Study 3), individuals may have extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship which they perceive relatively negative and relatively dissatisfying. According to extended contact theory, then, this negative example of cross-group romantic contact will provide a poor example of intergroup contact which will deter individuals from such contact and could even exacerbate intergroup attitudes (e.g., Allport, 1954; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997).

Nevertheless, even extended contact with poor quality cross-group romantic relationship may have some beneficial outcomes. In Study 3, for example, I found that those who know a cross-group couple, despite being perceived relatively negatively, had more positive intergroup attitudes than individuals who had no such extended contact experience. The study, however, did not address whether the quality of cross-group relationships further impacted on intergroup attitudes. In other words, although extended contact with any cross-group relationship (satisfying

or dissatisfying) was better than having no contact, the study did not investigate whether extended contact with high quality cross-group relationships was associated with more positive intergroup attitudes than having extended contact with low quality cross-group relationships. This question will be addressed in Study 4.

6.2 Study 4

Acknowledging that the quality of extended contact influences interpersonal perceptions and intergroup attitudes (e.g., Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997), the present study experimentally examines how relationship quality influences extended contact outcomes. In the experiment, participants learn about either a cross-group or same-group relationship, which is either satisfying or dissatisfying. In support of previous interpersonal research, I expect that participants, controlling for the experimental satisfaction manipulation, will perceive cross-group romantic relationships more negatively than same-group relationships. Moreover, focusing on extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships, I expect that participants who learn about a satisfying, as opposed to a dissatisfying, cross-group romantic relationship will perceive greater acceptance of such contact and will subsequently be more likely to engage in cross-group romantic contact (e.g., Lee & Gudykunst, 2001). Furthermore, participants who learn about a satisfying cross-group romantic relationship are also expected to report more positive general intergroup attitudes than participants who view a dissatisfying cross-group relationship (e.g., Wright et al., 1997, Study 4).

6.3 Method

6.3.1 Participants and design

One-hundred and six White participants (81 females and 25 males) between the ages of 16 and 23 years ($M = 17.25$, $SD = 1.19$) were randomly assigned to a 2 (relationship type: same-group vs. cross-group) x 2 (relationship satisfaction rating: dissatisfying vs. satisfying) between subjects experimental design. Relationship type was indicated by the ethnicities of the heterosexual partners ostensibly involved in the relationship. The female was always described as White, while her partner was described as either White (same-group relationship) or South Asian (cross-group relationship). Relationship satisfaction was indicated by either a 2 (dissatisfying condition) or a 6 (satisfying condition) on a 7 point scale. Thirty-three participants viewed a dissatisfying same-group relationship (i.e., White male and White female rating their relationship as a '2'), 27 participants viewed a satisfying same-group relationship (i.e., White male and White female rating their relationship as a '6'), 26 participants viewed a dissatisfying cross-group relationship (i.e., South Asian male and White female rating their relationship as a '2'), and 20 participants viewed a satisfying cross-group relationship (i.e., South Asian male and White female rating their relationship as a '6'). The participants were recruited from the University of Leeds Participant Pool in exchange for class credit ($n = 18$) and from two sixth form colleges attending a Research Open Day at the University of Leeds (St Aidan's and St John Fisher Associated Sixth Form: $n = 32$; Heckmondwike Grammar School; $n = 56$).

6.3.2 Materials and procedure

To reduce the possibility of participants guessing the true nature of the study and responding in a socially desirable manner, the study was described as a romantic compatibility study. Participants were informed that they would be giving their first impressions of a real couple who had taken part in a previous study investigating relationship satisfaction. To bolster the cover story, all experimental conditions instructed the participants to view passport style photographs of the individuals within the couple (a male and a female) and were given a page of each partners' relationship questionnaire responses to read. The female was always pictured and described as White, while the ethnicity of the male partner, both in the photographs and on the questionnaires, was manipulated (White or South Asian). The quality of the relationship was the satisfaction rating (dissatisfying vs. satisfying) and was identical for both partners.

Primes. Participants were given two 'relationship questionnaires' ostensibly completed by both partners in the couple (see Appendix A for examples of the questionnaires). One of the questionnaires was supposedly completed by a White female in which she described her partner as male, 25 years old, and depending on experimental condition, as being either White or South Asian. In addition, the questionnaire also noted their relationship duration ("2.5 years"), the amount of times they go out as a couple every month ("About 6 times - depends") and her satisfaction with the relationship (either 2 or 6 on a 7 point scale depending on condition; see Appendix A.1 for example). The other questionnaire was supposedly completed by the male partner. In this questionnaire, the male partner indicated that his partner was a White female aged 25 years old, that they had been together for two and a half years, and that they go out as a couple "About 5-6 times" a month. The only variable to change on this questionnaire was the rating of his satisfaction

with the relationship (2 or 6 on a 7 point scale) which matched his partner's rating and was dependent upon the experimental condition (see Appendix A.2 for example). Passport style photographs of the partners were attached to the questionnaire they supposedly completed (e.g., White female photograph was attached to the questionnaire describing the male partner). The three photographs used in this study (South Asian male, White male, and White female) were taken from The Center for Vital Longevity Face Database (Minear & Park, 2004; the three faces are presented in Appendix A.3). A pilot test revealed that the faces were of equal attractiveness (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Mean attractiveness comparisons for experimental photographs

| | Attractiveness <i>M (SD)</i> | Paired sample <i>t</i> -test | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| | | White female | White male | South Asian male |
| White female | 3.21 (1.34) | -- | - | - |
| White male | 3.14 (1.53) | -.32 | - | - |
| South Asian male | 3.21 (1.34) | 1.00 | .25 | - |

Note. $N = 28$, all $ps > .75$ for paired comparisons.

6.3.3 First impressions

Following the presentation of the experimental materials, participants completed an adapted version of the Relationship Quality Component Inventory (RQCI) to assess the perceived relationship quality for both of the individuals involved in the relationship (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000). The 18-item inventory comprises of six, three item subscales investigating relationship

Satisfaction (“How satisfied is *she/he* with *her/his* relationship?”, “How content is *she/he* with *her/his* relationship?”, and “How happy is *she/he* with *her/his* relationship?”; both partners $\alpha = .97$), Commitment (e.g., “How committed is *she/he* to *her/his* relationship?”, “How dedicated is *she/he* to *her/his* relationship?”, and “How devoted is *she/he* to *her/his* relationship?”; female partner $\alpha = .92$; male partner $\alpha = .91$), Intimacy (e.g., “How intimate is *her/his* relationship?”, “How close is *her/his* relationship?”, and “How connected is *she/he* to *her/his* partner?”; female partner $\alpha = .87$; male partner $\alpha = .86$), Trust (e.g., “How much can *she/he* trust *her/his* partner?”, “How much can *she/he* count on *her/his* partner?”, and “How dependable is *her/his* partner?”; both partners $\alpha = .88$), Passion (e.g., “How passionate is *her/his* relationship?”, “How lustful is *her/his* relationship?”, and “How sexually intense is *her/his* relationship?”; female partner $\alpha = .95$; male partner $\alpha = .93$), and Love (e.g., “How much does *she/he* love *her/his* partner?”, “How much does *she/he* adore *her/his* partner?”, and “How much does *she/he* cherish *her/his* partner?”; female partner $\alpha = .93$; male partner $\alpha = .94$). Questions were answered on a 7-point scale (1 = *Not at all* to 7 = *Extremely*).

6.3.4 Interpersonal measures

Participants then reported how likely they were to date, have a long term romantic relationship with, and have a child with a South Asian person (1 = *Not at all likely* to 9 = *Very likely*; adapted from the Partner Preference Scale; L. M. Brown et al., 2003). They also reported to what extent their friends and parents would approve of the three distinct relationships (1 = *Disapprove a great deal* to 7 = *Approve a great deal*; Miller et al., 2004). The likelihood to have the three relationships and the perceived approvals of friends and parents were analysed separately.

6.3.5 Intergroup measures

To further understand the consequences of extended contact with cross-group relationships, participants' reported to what extent they feel 18 affective reactions towards South Asian people (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005). These included to what extent they like, dislike, fear, pity, resent, respect, experience positive feelings, experience negative feelings, feel anger, feel disgusted by, feel hurt by, feel guilt, feel anxious, feel happiness, feel sadness, feel pride, feel secure and feel sympathy towards South Asian people (1 = *Not at all* to 9 = *Extremely*). As Cottrell and Neuberg (2005) argue that each affective reaction is different from one another and collating the measures would obscure "the rich texturing of emotions" that people feel toward groups (p. 770), these affective reactions were analysed separately so as to gain a broader picture of how extended contact influences intergroup outcomes.

6.3.6 Control variables

Although participants were randomly assigned to experimental conditions, I wanted to be sure that the participants did not significantly differ on important related variables. To this end, participants' own cross-group dating frequency was measured by indicating how many times they have had a romantic relationship lasting over a month with a South Asian person (*Never, Once, Twice, or Often*: Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004). Cross-group friendships was also measured by the item, "In my circle of friends there are people who are of a different ethnicity to me" (*Very rarely or never, Rarely, More often than rarely, Often, Very often*; Groweic, 2007). Other forms of intergroup contact assessed were the amount of previous intergroup contact and the amount of previous positive contact participants have had with South Asian people (adapted from Plant & Devine, 2003). Previous contact was measured by four items: "In the past I have interacted with South Asian people in

many areas of my life (e.g., school, friends, work, club)", "The neighbourhood(s) I grew up in had mostly White people", "The high school I attended had mostly White students", and "In the past, I have rarely interacted with South Asian people" (last three items were reverse scored, $\alpha = .76$). The amount of previous positive contact consisted of 3 items which are described in section 3.4.2.4 ($\alpha = .76$). Both scales were rated on a 7-point scale; 1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*.

6.4 Results

6.4.1 Manipulation check

To ensure the satisfaction manipulation was effective, 2 (Quality: Dissatisfying vs. Satisfying) x 2 (Relationship type: Same-group vs. Cross-group) ANOVAs were conducted and revealed main effects of the satisfaction manipulation on all relationship quality items which indicated that the manipulation successfully influenced participants' perceptions of the partners in the relationships. Specifically, participants who viewed a dissatisfying relationship (rated as 2 on the questionnaire) rated both female and male partners' relationships significantly lower in quality on all the RQCI subscales than those who viewed a relationship rated as a 6 on the relationship satisfaction (Female Satisfaction: $F(1,102) = -565.75, p < .001$; Female Commitment: $F(1,102) = -95.91, p < .001$; Female Intimacy: $F(1,102) = -144.18, p < .001$; Female Trust: $F(1,102) = -37.61, p < .001$; Female Passion: $F(1,102) = -87.31, p < .001$; Female Love: $F(1,102) = -99.06, p < .001$; Male Satisfaction: $F(1,102) = -624.79, p < .001$; Male Commitment: $F(1,102) = -85.50, p < .001$; Male Intimacy: $F(1,102) = -138.09, p < .001$; Male Trust: $F(1,102) = -45.08, p < .001$; Male Passion: $F(1,102) = -95.88, p < .001$; Male Love: $F(1,102) = -100.69, p < .001$).

In addition, one-way ANOVAs were conducted to ensure the four experimental groups did not differ from one another on important contact variables. Results revealed that participants in the experimental groups did not differ in their cross-group dating history ($F(3,101) = .87, p = .46$), cross-group friendships ($F(3,99) = .87, p = .46$), previous intergroup contact ($F(3,101) = .07, p = .98$), or previous positive intergroup contact ($F(3,101) = .05, p = .99$). A chi-square test also revealed that gender distribution across groups was not significantly different, $\chi(3) = 1.60, p = .66$.

6.4.2 Perceptions of cross-group and same-group couples

To determine how cross-group and same-group couples were perceived, the same 2 (Quality: Dissatisfying vs. Satisfying) x 2 (Relationship type: Same-group vs. Cross-group ANOVAs used in the manipulation check were examined to investigate whether relationship type (i.e., cross-group vs. same-group relationship) influenced participants' perceptions of the relationships. Analyses revealed that there were no significant interactions of relationship quality and relationship type (all measures: $F(1,102) > 2.36, p > .13$) and no differences in the reported levels of commitment, intimacy, passion and love for either the male or the female partners in the same-group and cross-group couples (see Table 6.2). Although these findings suggest that the couples were generally perceived to be similar in quality, analyses revealed four main effects of Relationship Type, indicating that both the female and male cross-group partners were perceived to be more satisfied with their relationships (female: $F(1,102) = 4.41, p = .04$; male: $F(1,102) = 4.18, p = .04$), and more trusting of their partners (female: $F(1,102) = 4.66, p = .03$; male: $F(1,102) = 4.82, p = .03$) than same-group partners.

Table 6.2 Main effect of relationship type on perceptions of cross-group and same-group partners' relationship quality

| RCQI subscale | Partner gender | Cross-group <i>M(SE)</i> | Same-group <i>M(SE)</i> | <i>F</i> |
|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Commitment | Female | 4.89(.15) | 4.66(.13) | 1.21 |
| | Male | 4.80(.15) | 4.63(.13) | 0.70 |
| Intimacy | Female | 4.29(.14) | 4.31(.12) | 0.09 |
| | Male | 4.28(.13) | 4.33(.12) | 0.07 |
| Passion | Female | 3.82(.18) | 3.79(.16) | 0.02 |
| | Male | 3.79(.18) | 3.73(.15) | 0.07 |
| Love | Female | 4.68(.17) | 4.43(.15) | 1.21 |
| | Male | 4.61(.17) | 4.57(.15) | 0.03 |
| Satisfaction | Female | 4.28(.11) | 3.99(.09) | 4.41* |
| | Male | 4.25(.10) | 3.97(.09) | 4.18* |
| Trust | Female | 5.10(.16) | 4.63(.14) | 4.66* |
| | Male | 5.14(.16) | 4.68(.14) | 4.82* |

Note. Cross-group *n* = 46; Same-group *n* = 60.

**p* < .05.

6.4.3 Influence of cross-group relationship quality

As the main focus of the study was how the quality of cross-group romantic relationships (indicated by the manipulated satisfaction ratings) influences intergroup and interpersonal attitudes, planned comparisons between satisfying (rated as 6) and dissatisfying (rated as 2) cross-group relationships were conducted for the interpersonal and intergroup outcomes.

6.4.4 Interpersonal measures

Planned comparisons between the two cross-group relationship conditions revealed that participants who viewed a satisfied cross-group couple reported that they were more likely to date a South Asian person ($t(102) = 1.97, p = .05$), more likely to have a relationship with a South Asian person ($t(101) = 2.28, p = .03$), and perceived greater friend approval to date a South Asian person ($t(102) = 2.51, p = .01$) than participants who viewed a dissatisfied cross-group couple (see Table 6.3).

Furthermore, bootstrapping mediational analyses illustrated that the significant effect of the satisfaction manipulation on both the likelihood to date and the likelihood to have a relationship with a South Asian person was fully mediated by the perceived approval of friends to date someone South Asian. These full mediations are indicated in Table 6.4 by the absence of zero in the confidence intervals and a lack of significant direct effect of the satisfaction manipulation after accounting for the mediational effect of the perceived friend approval to date a South Asian person (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

The planned comparisons did not, however, reveal any other significant differences on the interpersonal outcomes. As illustrated in Table 6.3, participants in the two conditions did not differ in the reported likelihood of having a child with a South Asian person ($t(102) = .91, p = .37$), the perceived friend approval of having a relationship with a South Asian person ($t(102) = .99, p = .32$), the perceived friend approval of having a child with a South Asian person ($t(102) = 1.26, p = .21$), nor in the perceived parental approval of having any relationship with a South Asian person (dating: ($t(102) = -1.63, p = .11$); relationship: ($t(102) = -1.40, p = .17$); child: ($t(102) = -.23, p = .82$).

Table 6.3 Planned comparisons between cross-group conditions of likelihood and perceived approvals of relationships with South Asians

| | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | <i>t</i> |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|----------|
| | <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>) | <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>) | |
| Likelihood of dating | 3.12(1.66) | 4.35(2.52) | 1.97* |
| Friend approval of dating | 3.92(1.70) | 5.25(1.45) | 2.51* |
| Parent approval of dating | 4.31(1.87) | 3.35(2.18) | -1.63 |
| Likelihood of romantic relationship | 3.08(1.73) | 4.65(2.76) | 2.28* |
| Friend approval of romantic relationship | 4.12(1.71) | 4.65(1.69) | 0.99 |
| Parent approval of romantic relationship | 4.38(1.88) | 3.55(2.06) | -1.40 |
| Likelihood of child | 3.08(2.00) | 3.70(2.23) | 0.91 |
| Friend approval of child | 3.58(1.90) | 4.30(1.90) | 1.26 |
| Parent approval of child | 3.88(2.22) | 3.75(1.62) | -0.23 |

* $p \leq .05$

Table 6.4 The mediational influence of perceived friend approval on likelihood to date and have a romantic relationship with a South Asian partner

| | Satisfaction effect | | Perceived friend | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|----------------------|---------|
| | coefficients | | approval as mediator | |
| | Total | Direct | Estimate | 95% CI |
| Likelihood of dating | .31* | .14 | .17(.08) | .05/.38 |
| Likelihood of romantic relationship | .39* | .17 | .23(.10) | .06/.47 |

Estimates (standard errors in parentheses) are based on 5000 resamples.

CI = Confidence interval.

* $p < .05$.

6.4.5 Intergroup measures

Next, I examined the intergroup consequences of viewing a satisfied cross-group relationship compared to a dissatisfied cross-group relationship (Table 6.5).

Table 6.5 Planned comparisons of affective reactions by cross-group conditions

| | Dissatisfied <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>) | Satisfied <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>) | <i>t</i> |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
| Like outgroup | 5.88(1.53) | 5.55(1.70) | 0.74 |
| Positive feelings | 5.88(1.56) | 5.55(1.57) | 0.66 |
| Dislike | 2.69(1.52) | 2.65(1.50) | 0.09 |
| Negative feelings | 2.81(1.39) | 2.80(1.40) | 0.02 |
| Anger | 2.15(1.35) | 2.10(1.41) | 0.12 |
| Disgust | 1.88(1.37) | 2.00(1.45) | -0.26 |
| Fear | 2.31(1.64) | 2.05(1.73) | 0.50 |
| Pity | 2.38(1.77) | 1.70(1.17) | 1.55 |
| Guilt | 2.08(1.70) | 1.50(0.69) | 1.42 |
| Resent | 1.88(1.56) | 1.65(1.18) | 0.61 |
| Anxious | 2.12(1.71) | 2.05(1.54) | 0.15 |
| Respect | 5.42(1.63) | 5.40(1.96) | 0.04 |
| Happiness | 5.08(1.65) | 4.75(1.77) | 0.65 |
| Hurt | 2.23(1.82) | 1.70(1.22) | 1.14 |
| Sadness | 2.85(2.17) | 1.55(0.69) | 2.87** |
| Pride | 2.88(1.93) | 2.95(1.99) | -0.11 |
| Secure | 4.96(2.07) | 4.30(2.00) | 1.11 |
| Sympathy | 3.23(1.88) | 2.15(1.42) | 2.10* |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results of the planned comparisons between cross-group conditions illustrated in Table 6.5 revealed that participants who viewed a dissatisfied cross-group couple felt more sympathy and more sadness towards South Asian people in general than participants who viewed a satisfied cross-group couple. However, there were no further differences between the two groups' affective reactions towards South Asians.

6.5 Discussion

The present experiment investigated how the quality of extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship influenced interpersonal and intergroup attitudes. By manipulating the perceived satisfaction of a cross-group couple, I found that extended contact with a satisfying cross-group romantic relationship was associated with greater perceived friend approval to date a South Asian person which, in turn, increased the likelihood of both dating and entering into a long term romantic relationship with a South Asian person. Furthermore, extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship influenced general intergroup attitudes. Contrary to expectations, however, extended contact with a satisfying relationship did not generalise to more positive intergroup attitudes, instead extended contact with a dissatisfying relationship generalised to more compassionate affective reactions (sadness and sympathy) towards South Asian people. In addition, participants perceived cross-group partners to be more satisfied with their relationship and more trusting of their partners than their same-group partner counterparts.

6.5.1 Perceptions of cross-group couples

Controlling for the experimental manipulation of relationship satisfaction, participants rated both female and male cross-group partners as being more satisfied with their relationship and as more trusting of their partners than participants who learned about same-group partners. What makes these findings particularly surprising is that the satisfaction manipulation (2 or 6 on a 7-point scale) was clearly apparent to the participants. The manipulation check, for example, illustrated that participants who learned about a satisfying relationship perceived significantly greater partner satisfaction than participants who learned of a dissatisfying relationship. Moreover, as previous studies indicate that cross-group relationships are generally perceived to be less satisfying than same-group relationships, if there were to be any difference in the satisfaction ratings, it would be expected that participants would rate cross-group relationships to be less, rather than more, satisfying than same-group relationships (e.g., Gurung & Duong, 1999; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; Study 3). Furthermore, I also expected that if there were to be any differences in any of the other relationship components (including the ratings of trust), cross-group relationships would be perceived more negatively than same-group relationships.

Although the positive perceptions of the cross-group relationships are contrary to my predictions, other studies have found similar results. Study 3, for example, revealed that although cross-group partners were generally perceived to have lower quality relationships than same-group partners, there was no difference in the perceived commitment of the relationships. In addition, Lehmiller and Agnew (2006) found that marginalised relationship partners, such as age-gap and interracial partners, unexpectedly reported greater commitment to their relationship than non-marginalised, traditional relationship partners. Both of these studies, and others

investigating women in abusive relationships (Rusbult & Martz, 1995), suggest that a possible reason for this greater than anticipated quality is that marginalised relationships, such as cross-group relationships, compensate for their marginalised status.

According to the compensation hypothesis (e.g., Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; see section 2.4.1 for discussion), participants in the current experiment may have rated cross-group partners as being more satisfied with their relationship and more trusting of their partners than same-group partners as a way to compensate, or even explain why, individuals would enter into a normatively disapproved cross-group relationship (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Miller et al., 2004). It is well known, for example, that entering into a relationship with an outgroup member is a social norm violation and that people who do so risk family opposition and even rejection (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Miller et al., 2004). Therefore, to enter into a romantic relationship with an outgroup member, an individual must be sure that the relationship is worth the risk (i.e., that it is very satisfying), and that the partner is worth the risk (i.e., that they can be trusted not to harm the relationship in anyway) of potential familial wrath and rejection.

Although this argument could help to explain the current findings, the results from the current experiment do not provide substantial support for this argument. Notably, as cross-group partners were perceived to be equally committed, passionate, intimate, and in love with their partners as same-group partners, there were no negative perceptions of cross-group relationships that needed to be compensated for. Moreover, although it is possible that cross-group partners are perceived to encounter greater disapproval of their relationships and so may compensate by having more satisfying relationships and more trustworthy partners

(e.g., Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006), I did not measure perceived disapproval of the relationships and so cannot substantiate this hypothesis.

Another alternative explanation of the finding that cross-group partners were perceived more positively than same-group partners could be that attitudes towards cross-group couples are improving. Specifically, despite a wealth of research indicating that cross-group couples are perceived negatively (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Miller et al., 2004; Study 1; Study 2; Study 3), this experiment suggests that cross-group partners are perceived to have more satisfying relationships and to be more trusting of their partners. Nevertheless, as this finding goes against a great deal of research, future research could attempt to replicate this finding and investigate why cross-group partners were unexpectedly perceived more positively than same-group partners in the current experiment. Such research could explore whether attitudes towards cross-group partners are improving, or whether, consistent with the compensation hypothesis, cross-group partners are perceived more positively than same-group partners to compensate for the perceived disapproval against them.

6.5.2 Interpersonal outcomes

In addition to exploring the perceptions of cross-group couples, the main aim of Study 4 was to investigate how the quality of a cross-group romantic relationship in extended contact influenced interpersonal choices and intergroup attitudes. Examining the interpersonal outcomes reveals that the quality of a cross-group relationship did not have an impact on the majority of the interpersonal measures used in the experiment. Specifically, learning about a satisfying or dissatisfying relationship did not influence participants' perceptions of parental approval if they were to have any type of cross-group romantic relationship, or their perceptions of

friend approval to have a long term relationship or a child with a South Asian person. In fact, examining the means of the perceived approvals of both experimental groups (shown in Table 6.3) reveals that participants did not believe that any relationship with a South Asian person (dating, romantic relationship or child) would be greatly approved of by their friends or parents as the majority of the perceived approvals were around 3 or 4 on a 7 point scale.

Nevertheless, despite these general perceptions of disapproval, the quality of cross-group romantic relationships was found to impact upon the perceived friend approval to date a South Asian person. Importantly, and consistent with previous research with other forms of intergroup contact (e.g., R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997), this perceived positive norm towards cross-group dating encouraged participants to report that they would be more likely to date and have a relationship with a South Asian person. These full mediations indicate that positive examples of cross-group romantic contact promotes more positive attitudes towards own cross-group dating by illustrating positive norms towards such contact (e.g., Wright et al., 1997).

Combining these findings with the results from previous chapters suggests three important points. First, as revealed in Studies 1 and 3, extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship is associated with more positive and open interpersonal attitudes than having no such contact. Second, the current experiment, expands upon these findings by illustrating that having extended contact with a high quality, satisfying relationship is slightly more beneficial than contact with a dissatisfying relationship. Third, combining all of these findings highlights that perceived norms play an important mediating role between extended contact and interpersonal choices and attitudes. That is, simply learning about a cross-group romantic relationship promotes positive interpersonal attitudes because the contact

illustrates that other people would endorse and approve of such cross-group romantic contact.

The practical implications of these findings are also important. Although it would be impossible to manipulate real life relationships to be perceived as satisfying, it is possible to implement these findings by presenting positive examples of cross-group romantic relationships in the media. Soap operas, for example, could include cross-group couples who epitomise high quality, satisfying romantic relationships. This extended contact would help to improve norms towards such relationships, thereby helping to erode prejudice and opposition against such unions. This, in turn, would help reduce discrimination towards partners already involved in cross-group romantic relationships and may even encourage others to enter into relationships with outgroup members.

6.5.3 Intergroup outcomes

Similar to the interpersonal outcomes, the quality of cross-group romantic relationships had a limited but important influence on the intergroup outcomes of extended contact. Notably, I had predicted that higher quality extended contact (i.e., satisfying relationships) would be associated with more positive intergroup attitudes than extended contact with a dissatisfying relationship. Contrary to this hypothesis, however, the experiment revealed that the only differences between the two experimental groups were in two compassionate feelings towards South Asians. Specifically, participants who learned of a dissatisfying cross-group relationship reported greater feelings of sympathy and sadness towards South Asians than participants who learned of a satisfying relationship.

Although the intergroup findings are contrary to my expectations, they are somewhat consistent with Pettigrew's (1997) large scale cross-sectional study

examining the extent affect towards individual outgroup members generalises to the entire outgroup. In particular, using over 3500 participants in four different countries, Pettigrew found that the strongest link between contact and prejudice reduction was in the feelings of sympathy and admiration towards the outgroup. Explaining these findings, Pettigrew suggests that the affect people feel towards individual members of the outgroup generalises to the outgroup. Applying this argument to the current findings, I would argue that when individuals view a dissatisfying, as opposed to a satisfying, cross-group relationship, they feel more compassion for the partners involved, including feelings of sympathy and sadness that their relationship is not satisfying. As affective reactions are said to generalise, these compassionate feelings towards the dissatisfied partners are then extended to affective reactions towards the entire outgroup (e.g., Pettigrew, 1997).

Uniting these intergroup findings with the interpersonal outcomes of this experiment, together with the results from Studies 1 and 3, it is clear that having extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship is likely to produce positive outcomes regardless of the quality of the relationship. While extended contact with satisfying relationships encourages more personal openness to cross-group relationships by illustrating positive norms towards such contact, having extended contact with dissatisfying cross-group romantic relationships promotes more compassionate affective reactions towards the cross-group partner's group. These results, furthermore, imply that although it would be ideal for cross-group relationships to be satisfying and to be viewed as satisfying in order to promote healthy, satisfying relationships which can promote positive norms towards such relationships, when these relationships are less than optimal, they still have the potential to promote compassionate intergroup feelings that could benefit society.

6.6 Limitations and future directions

The current experiment suggests that cross-group partners are perceived to be more satisfied with their relationship and more trusting of their partners than same-group partners. As these findings are contrary to previous research which has generally found that cross-group relationships are perceived more negatively compared to same-group relationships (e.g., Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; Study 3), further research is necessary to replicate these findings. Future research could, for example, use the compensation hypothesis to examine the possibility that cross-group relationships are perceived more positively than same-group relationships because they are perceived to compensate for the lack of approval towards them (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006).

Future research could also address other limitations of this research. As this experiment was an initial investigation into how the quality of cross-group romantic relationships influences intergroup and interpersonal outcomes, I chose to focus only on one type of cross-group romantic relationship. By doing so, I was able to manipulate and compare the quality of cross-group relationships without adding the influence of additional variables which may have obscured the impact of relationship quality.

Only investigating one type of cross-group romantic relationship may, however, limit the experiments findings. As Study 1 illustrates, romantic relationships involving different partners from different outgroups elicit unique reactions (e.g., Levin et al., 2007). Extended contact with a cross-group relationship involving a White woman and a South Asian man may not, therefore, generalise to different cross-group relationship compositions. Future research, then, could replicate the current experiment but use different partner primes, including different

cross-group partnerships (e.g., Black female and South Asian male), different gender compositions (e.g., South Asian female and White male), and different social groups (e.g., religious groups; Catholic female and Jewish man).

In addition to investigating only one type of cross-group romantic relationship, another limitation to the experiment was the ethnic homogeneity of the participants. As approvals of different relationship combinations vary depending on participants' group status (e.g., minority vs. majority; Levin et al., 2007; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005) and due to the difficulty in obtaining a sufficient sample of non-White participants, I decided to focus only on White participants attitudes towards same-group and cross-group relationships. In doing so I was able to identify the interpersonal and intergroup outcomes for extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships for White people in Britain. This focus on White participants, however, raises questions about the generalisability of the outcomes of this form of intergroup contact. Further research could employ non-White participants and examine whether the quality of extended contact with romantic relationships has a similar impact on the intergroup and interpersonal attitudes of members from different social groups.

A further important limitation to the experiment is that I only investigated how mutually dissatisfying and mutually satisfying relationships influenced attitudes. As romantic relationships usually involve two independent partners, it is feasible that the partners within the relationships evaluate their relationships differently from one another. For example, one partner may be extremely satisfied with their relationship, while the other may be extremely dissatisfied. This inequity, rather than, or in combination with, the actual quality of the relationship, could impact upon interpersonal perceptions and attitudes, as well as general intergroup attitudes. For example, participants could feel pity for the dissatisfied partner but

feel resentment and anger towards the satisfied partner. In turn, these interpersonal outcomes could generalise to the partners' respective groups. However, this assertion would need to be addressed in future studies.

Future research might also explore the reasons for partners' relationship satisfaction and how they influence intergroup and interpersonal attitudes. In this study there was no mention of why the relationships were satisfying or dissatisfying. If, however, partners were to explain that the satisfaction of their relationships were due to group membership factors, the quality of the relationship may have a greater impact on attitudes. For example, indicating that the relationships were (dis)satisfying because friends and family (did not) approve of cross-group romantic relationships may increase the saliency of group memberships. This increase in group saliency, together with group based reasons for the reported (dis)satisfaction, may subsequently lead to greater generalisation and therefore have a more powerful influence on intergroup attitudes (e.g., Pettigrew, 1998).

6.7 Summary

Taken together with the previous findings on actual extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships (Study 3), the current experiment indicates that extended contact with this form of intergroup contact is likely to produce positive interpersonal and intergroup outcomes. On the interpersonal level, cross-group partners were perceived to be more satisfied with their relationships and more trusting of their partners than same-group partners. Furthermore, extended contact with satisfying cross-group romantic relationships promoted greater personal openness to cross-group romances, via improved perceived norms towards such contact. In addition, extended contact with a dissatisfying relationship also promoted more compassionate feelings towards the outgroup partner's ethnic group.

These findings suggest that as there is an increasing chance of having extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship (e.g., McFadden, 2001), attitudes and norms towards the cross-group romantic couples will progressively improve (e.g., Chapter 5). These attitudes will benefit partners currently involved in cross-group relationships by reducing disapproval and discrimination towards the relationships and may even facilitate and encourage more cross-group relationships. Moreover, even when cross-group relationships are perceived as being relatively negative and dissatisfying, extended contact with these relationships could also result in more positive, compassionate general intergroup attitudes. In sum, then, the findings suggest that extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship, regardless of the quality of the relationship, will benefit cross-group couples and society in general.

Chapter 7

Norms towards extended romantic contact

As evidenced by the empirical findings in this thesis and previous research conducted elsewhere, perceived norms play a vital role in both intergroup contact and interpersonal relationships (e.g., Allport, 1954; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Miller et al., 2004; Pettigrew, 1991; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Uskul et al., 2007; Wright et al., 1997). By illustrating what individuals ought to do, these norms indicate the acceptability of certain forms of intergroup contact and either encourage or discourage individuals from engaging in cross-group interactions (e.g., Allport, 1954; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997; see section 1.4.3 for further discussion). Similarly, perceived norms of approval also illustrate to what extent romantic partners are approved of and how much support the relationships would receive which can impact upon the initiation, development, and termination of the relationships (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; H. Wang et al., 2007; see section 2.3 for further discussion). Combining these intergroup and interpersonal influences suggests that cross-group romantic relationships are likely to be strongly influenced by the perceptions of group norms, a suggestion which has been greatly supported by the findings of this thesis and is explored further in Study 5. Specifically, this experiment aims to investigate how the perceived norms of both the ingroup and outgroup, together with their interaction, impact upon how extended contact influences intergroup attitudes and interpersonal choices.

7.1 Norms in intergroup contact theory

The current thesis has investigated the role of norms from the intergroup contact perspective (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1991; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997). Through this perspective, the role of norms is straightforward; if others are perceived to approve of intergroup contact and interpersonal relationships, individuals will be more likely to hold positive expectations and attitudes towards such contact and will be more willing to engage in the contact. On the other hand, if others are perceived to disapprove of intergroup contact and interpersonal relationships, individuals will become anxious about the contact and will be less likely to engage in the contact for fear of awkward interactions or even reprisals from the ingroup which may include punishments or even exclusion from the group (e.g., Terry & Hogg, 1996; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997).

As individuals are highly influenced by the norms of the group they most strongly identify with (i.e., the ingroup), perceived ingroup norms are thought to be more powerful in determining behaviour than outgroup norms (Hewstone & Swart, 2011; Jetten et al., 1996). Indeed, the studies exploring intergroup romantic contact presented in this thesis illustrate that ingroup norms are particularly important in the development and expression of both intergroup and interpersonal attitudes. Consistent with previous research, for example, Study 3 revealed that the perception of ingroup approval fully mediated the association between extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship and positive intergroup and interpersonal attitudes (e.g., L. Cameron et al., 2011; De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; R. N. Turner et al., 2008). This finding suggests that intergroup contact promotes positive intergroup and interpersonal attitudes because individuals not only witness an ingroup member engaging in such contact, but importantly, perceive other ingroup members to

approve of such contact (e.g., L. Cameron et al., 2011; De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; Gomez et al., 2011; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997).

In addition to the powerful role of ingroup norms, however, both intergroup contact theory and interpersonal theories of attraction suggest that individuals' behaviours and attitudes are also subject to, and influenced by, the approval of outgroups (e.g., L. Cameron et al., 2011; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997). According to the extended contact hypothesis, for example, vicarious intergroup contact promotes positive intergroup attitudes because it illustrates both positive ingroup and outgroup norms towards intergroup contact (Wright et al., 1997). Specifically, as both ingroup and outgroup members indicate that they are open and willing to engage in intergroup contact and there are seemingly no normative restraints on the interaction, people who view such an interaction will hold positive expectations of the outgroup and of intergroup contact which will lead to pleasant intergroup experiences which, in turn, will help to develop positive attitudes towards the outgroup and positive intergroup attitudes in general (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1997; 1998; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1997).

In support of this hypothesis, the concept of the reciprocity principle (Dittes, 1959; Dittes & Kelley, 1956) derived from the interpersonal literature, also suggests that when both groups are perceived to hold positive norms towards contact, positive outcomes will develop. The reciprocity principle suggests that individuals like and are attracted to those who are perceived to like and be attracted to them (e.g., Dittes & Kelley, 1956). In terms of intergroup contact, this theory suggests that if an outgroup is perceived to hold favourable attitudes towards the ingroup, as illustrated in a positive intergroup interaction for example, ingroup members will reciprocate and hold positive attitudes towards the outgroup.

Combining intergroup contact theory with the interpersonal theory of reciprocal attraction strongly suggests that when the ingroup and outgroup are perceived to share positive norms towards intergroup contact, such as cross-group romantic contact, individual group members will develop positive attitudes towards such contact. Notably, with the approval of both the ingroup and the outgroup, interactions between members of different groups will be encouraged meaning that intergroup interactions will be unburdened by stigma or punishment and positive expectations and attitudes will develop. Conversely, when both groups are perceived to disapprove of intergroup contact, there will be a great deal of pressure not to engage in intergroup contact and, as such, individuals will hold negative expectations and attitudes towards intergroup contact and will be even less likely to engage in intergroup contact as they risk the wrath from both groups.

Although intergroup contact theory does not directly address the possibility that the perception of ingroup norms and outgroup norms may differ, it is certainly possible that groups hold different norms of approval towards intergroup contact. Cross-group romantic relationships, for example, are known to be endorsed to different extents by different social groups (see sections 3.2.1.3 and 3.2.1.4 for discussion). Uskul et al. (2007), for example, compared Chinese-Canadians and European Canadians' views on interracial dating. In the study, they found that Chinese-Canadians, especially Chinese-Canadian males, endorsed more conservative norms of cross-group dating than European Canadians, and were less likely to be open and approving of cross-group dating general. Other research has shown similar group discrepancies in the norms of cross-group contact (e.g., Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005) and suggests that as groups hold independent norms from one another, it is possible that while one group approves of cross-group contact, the other group may not.

Despite not directly investigating how the interplay of group norms influences the effect of intergroup contact on attitudes, hypotheses derived from the theory offers some suggestions as to the consequences of perceiving one group to approve of intergroup contact while perceiving the other group to disapprove. Specifically, as ingroup norms are more powerful determinants of behaviour than outgroup norms (Hewstone & Swart, 2011; Jetten et al., 1996), the perceptions of ingroup norms should influence attitudes to a greater extent than the perceptions of outgroup attitudes. Relating this notion to the interplay of norms on attitudes, then, suggests that positive attitudes are more likely to develop when the ingroup approves and the outgroup disapproves, than when the outgroup is perceived to approve and the ingroup perceived to disapprove.

Consequently, applying these proposals to the role of group norms in extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship suggests that perceiving both groups to approve of the relationship is most likely to promote positive intergroup attitudes. Moreover, perceiving the ingroup to approve while the outgroup to disapprove is likely to promote more positive attitudes than perceiving the outgroup to approve while the ingroup to disapprove which, in turn, is likely to promote more positive attitudes than when both groups are perceived to disapprove of intergroup contact. In general, then, intergroup contact theory suggests that the interplay of perceived group norms is likely to have a significant influence on how extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship influences intergroup attitudes and interpersonal choices.

7.2 Norms in social identity theory

Despite its intuitive logic and grounding in empirical tested intergroup and interpersonal principles, the effects of the interplay of perceived ingroup and

outgroup norms on intergroup contact may not be as straightforward as suggested by intergroup contact theory. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978), for example, suggests that similar group norms will not produce positive attitudes but might, instead, result in greater prejudice and more negative attitudes towards the outgroup (e.g., R. Brown, 1984; R. Brown & Abrams, 1986; Jetten et al., 1996; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 2001; Tajfel & J. C. Turner, 1986).

Social identity theory argues that groups are formed and maintained by developing a distinct group identity that clearly differentiates themselves from other groups (R. Brown, 1984; R. Brown & Abrams, 1986; Jetten et al., 1996; 2001; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & J. C. Turner, 1986). This motivation to differentiate the ingroup from outgroups leads to a positive distinctiveness bias in which individuals exalt the ingroup while derogating outgroups (e.g., Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Jetten et al., 1996; 2001).

Although outgroups which are distinctly different from the ingroup are also subject to differentiation and discrimination from ingroup members (e.g., Brewer & Campbell, 1976), social identity theory suggests that positive distinctiveness occurs to a greater extent when outgroups are perceived to be similar, not different, to the ingroup (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996, Study 2, 2001). It is argued that the perceived similarity, and the associated reduction in group distinctiveness, poses a threat to ingroup identity. To relieve this threat, ingroup members make greater efforts to differentiate themselves from the outgroup by discriminating against the outgroup and holding more positive attitudes towards the ingroup. Outgroups which already differ from the ingroup pose no such threat to ingroup identity or group boundaries, and so are not subject to the same levels of discrimination as outgroups which are similar to the ingroup (e.g., Branscombe et al., 1999; R. Brown, 1984; Jetten et al., 1996, 2001).

Supporting this notion of positive differentiation, Jetten and colleagues conducted an experiment ostensibly investigating different money distribution strategies of students at two rival universities in the Netherlands (Jetten et al., 1996, Study 2). The researchers informed students at the University of Amsterdam that they were participating in a money distribution task to investigate whether students from the University of Amsterdam (ingroup) and students from the Free University (outgroup) utilised similar distribution strategies. In a 2 x 2 between subjects experimental design, participants were then informed that the ingroup and outgroup used either a fair distribution strategy (equal amounts of money to each group) or a discriminatory strategy in which they favoured and allocated more money to their group. After these primes, students were asked how they would distribute the money, in addition to completing evaluative trait ratings of the two student groups.

In support of the positive differentiation process, the results of the experiment found that when students perceived their ingroup norms to be similar to the norms of the outgroup, they reported greater ingroup bias in their allocation strategies than when the student groups differed in their norms. Importantly, even when ingroup and outgroups norms were both perceived to be positive (i.e., equal and fair distributions), students continued to report significantly larger ingroup bias on evaluative trait measures than when the groups were perceived to differ in their norms. These results illustrate that when group norms are perceived to be similar, group members can feel threatened by the similarity. This threat consequently leads to the need to further differentiate between the groups, and as a result leads to ingroup members discriminating against outgroups members to a greater extent than they would if the norms of the two groups were distinctly different from one another (Jetten et al., 1996; 2001; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & J. C. Turner, 1986).

Similar to intergroup contact theory, applying social identity theory and the process of positive differentiation to extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship suggests that the interplay of perceived norms will have a significant impact upon intergroup attitudes and interpersonal choices. Contrary to intergroup contact theory, however, social identity theory proposes that positive attitudes are most likely to develop when group norms are perceived to differ from one another. Furthermore, because similar attitudes and norms are perceived to threaten group identities, when groups are perceived to share similar norms towards cross-group romantic relationships (either positive or negative), social identity theory suggests that these similar norms will result in more negative intergroup and interpersonal attitudes than when the norms differ from one another.

7.3 Study 5

As indicated by the intergroup contact and social identity theories, the perception of ingroup and outgroup norms is influential in determining intergroup attitudes and interpersonal relationships (e.g., Allport, 1954; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Jetten et al., 1996; Miller et al., 2004; Pettigrew, 1997; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & J. C. Turner, 1986; R. N. Turner et al., 2008; Uskul et al., 2007; Wright et al., 1997). According to intergroup contact theory, when both groups are perceived to hold favourable attitudes towards intergroup contact, individuals perceive the contact as acceptable and consequently report more positive attitudes compared to when only one group norm is positive (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1997; Wright et al., 1997). Likewise, when both groups are perceived to report negative norms towards such contact, participants view the contact as unacceptable and consequently report negative attitudes towards the outgroup (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1997; Wright et al., 1997). Social identity theory, conversely, suggests

that it is the interplay of group norms that has a significant impact on intergroup attitudes (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996, 2001; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & J. C. Turner, 1986). This theory predicts that when both groups are perceived to hold similar norms towards the relationships (either positive or negative), group members will feel threatened and as a result will seek to further differentiate the ingroup from the outgroup by reporting more negative attitudes towards the outgroup than when the group norms differ (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996, 2001; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & J. C. Turner, 1986).

Acknowledging that ingroup and outgroup norms towards cross-group romantic relationships may be similar or different from one another (e.g., Uskul et al., 2007), this experiment aims to investigate the distinct predictions made by intergroup contact theory and social identity theory. In particular, the experiment examines how the interplay of perceived ingroup and outgroup norms towards cross-group romantic relationships impacts upon how extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship influences intergroup attitudes and interpersonal preferences.

7.4 Method

7.4.1 Participants and design

One-hundred and five White participants recruited from the University of Leeds Recruitment Database were randomly assigned to a 2 (Ingroup norms: 30% approval vs. 80% approval) x 2 (Outgroup norms: 30% approval vs. 80% approval) between subjects experimental design. Seven participants did not recall the group approval figures reported in the experimental material so were dropped from the analyses. The remaining 98 White participants (76 females) were aged between 18

and 57 years ($M = 23.92$ years, $SD = 7.09$) and completed the experiment in exchange for a place in a monetary prize draw with three prizes of £50.

7.4.2 Materials and procedure

Under the guise of investigating attitudes towards the media reporting of the UK Census in 2011, participants were informed that they were to read one of four articles detailing a census topic (Unemployment; Retirement Age; Interethnic Marriages; or Leaving Home). In reality, however, all participants read one of four fictitious articles concerning the approval ratings of interethnic marriages. Within the article, participants read that the number of interethnic marriages in the UK in 2011 had tripled since the last UK census in 2001, and that a study had been carried out to investigate how many people explicitly approved of these relationships. Dependent upon condition, participants read that either 30% or 80% of White people in the UK and 30% or 80% of South Asian people in the UK approved of the relationships. White and South Asian ethnic groups were used as these are the largest ethnic groups in the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2005). In addition to the description of the results, a graph was used to illustrate the approval ratings by ethnic group and a statement from a fictitious interethnic couple was used to detail how the approval, or lack of approval, had made their relationship stronger (see Appendix B for an example of the primes used).

7.4.3 Measures

7.4.3.1 Manipulation check

Before reading the magazine article, participants were instructed to pay attention to the details of the article as comprehension questions would follow. Once participants had read the article, they were asked two questions about the group norms portrayed in the survey; “According to the survey, what percentage of White

British people approved of interethnic marriages?” and “What percentage of South Asian British people approved of interethnic marriages?” The answers were dependent upon the experimental condition, and if the participants failed to remember or answered incorrectly, they were dropped from the analyses as these were the variables of interest ($n = 7$).

7.4.3.2 Interpersonal measures

Following the manipulation checks, participants reported how likely they were to date, have a long term romantic relationship with, and have a child with a South Asian person (1 = *Not at all likely* to 9 = *Very likely*; adapted from the Partner Preference Scale; L. M. Brown et al., 2003). They also reported to what extent they thought their friends, parents, and society would approve of the three distinct relationships (1 = *Disapprove a great deal* to 7 = *Approve a great deal*; Miller et al., 2004). The likelihood of having each of the three types of relationship and the perceived approvals of friends, parents, and society towards these relationships were analysed separately resulting in 12 interpersonal items.

7.4.3.3 Intergroup measures

To assess how group norms and their interactions influence intergroup attitudes, participants reported the threat they perceive from South Asian people, their affect towards South Asian people, and their willingness to engage in intergroup contact. To assess threat, participants indicated the extent to which they believe South Asian people violate trust and to what extent South Asian people take more than they give (Threat perceptions: Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005). As positive affect and sympathy were found to be associated with intergroup contact in previous studies in the thesis (e.g., Studies 2, 3, and 4), participants indicated to what extent they have positive feelings towards South Asian people and to what extent they feel

sympathy towards South Asian people (Affective reactions: Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005). Willingness to engage in intergroup contact was assessed by the other-group orientation scale detailed in section 3.2.4.1 and showed acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .72$). All items were assessed using a 7 point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*).

7.4.3.4 Control variables

To control for potentially important confounding romantic contact variables, participants indicated if they had ever been in a cross-group romantic relationship lasting a month or longer with a Black or South Asian person (*Yes* or *No*; adapted from Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004). Furthermore, to control for participants' experience of extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships, participants indicated if they knew anyone close to them (close family member, extended family member, or close friends) who had ever been in a cross-group romantic relationship (*Yes* or *No*). Chi-square tests revealed that participants in the conditions did not differ in their outgroup dating history, $\chi(3) = 2.36, p = .50$, their level of extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships, $\chi(3) = 1.92, p = .59$, or in the distribution of gender across the conditions, $\chi(3) = 5.93, p = .12$.

7.5 Results

To assess the influence of perceived group norms on participants' interpersonal choices and intergroup attitudes, 2 (ingroup norms: 30% approval vs. 80% approval) x 2 (outgroup norms: 30% approval vs. 80% approval) ANCOVAs were conducted controlling for participants' own cross-group dating history and their personal contact with cross-group romantic relationships. Means and standard deviations of the interpersonal and intergroup measures for each experimental

condition, together with the ANCOVA model F , main effect F , and interaction F statistics, are presented in Table 7.1 and Table 7.2 respectively.

Table 7.1 Descriptive and ANCOVA *F* statistics of the interpersonal measures, controlling for own cross-group dating and extended contact with cross-group couples

| | <u>Ingroup/Outgroup Approval</u> | | | | Overall <i>F</i> | <u><i>F</i> statistics</u> | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | 80/80 (<i>n</i> = 26) | 80/30 (<i>n</i> = 20) | 30/80 (<i>n</i> = 25) | 30/30 (<i>n</i> = 27) | | Ingroup Approval <i>F</i> | Outgroup Approval <i>F</i> | Interaction <i>F</i> |
| Likely - date | 3.50(.43) | 4.48(.48) | 5.00(.44) | 4.40(.42) | 3.15* | 2.56 | 0.19 | 3.20 |
| Friend approval - date | 4.93(.30) | 5.42(.34) | 5.34(.31) | 5.10(.30) | 0.87 | 0.02 | 0.16 | 1.38 |
| Parent approval - date | 3.62(.37) | 4.58(.42) | 4.66(.38) | 4.29(.36) | 2.22 [†] | 0.92 | 0.60 | 3.04 |
| Society approval - date | 4.25(.27) | 5.01(.31) | 4.49(.28) | 3.93(.27) | 1.68 | 2.17 | 0.12 | 5.53* |
| Likely - relationship | 3.61(.44) | 4.41(.50) | 4.93(.45) | 4.73(.44) | 3.72** | 3.18 [†] | 0.41 | 1.18 |
| Friend approval - relationship | 4.72(.31) | 5.43(.35) | 5.37(.31) | 5.09(.30) | 1.69 | 0.25 | 0.47 | 2.43 |

Table 7.1 continued

| | <u>Ingroup/Outgroup Approval</u> | | | | Overall <i>F</i> | <u><i>F</i> statistics</u> | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | 80/80 (<i>n</i> = 26) | 80/30 (<i>n</i> = 20) | 30/80 (<i>n</i> = 25) | 30/30 (<i>n</i> = 27) | | Ingroup Approval <i>F</i> | Outgroup Approval <i>F</i> | Interaction <i>F</i> |
| Parent approval - relationship | 3.41(.38) | 4.59(.43) | 4.58(.39) | 4.31(.38) | 2.80* | 1.26 | 1.31 | 3.36 |
| Society approval - relationship | 4.28(.28) | 4.68(.32) | 4.56(.28) | 3.85(.27) | 1.85 | 0.90 | 0.30 | 3.65 |
| Likely - child | 2.87(.45) | 4.04(.52) | 4.13(.46) | 4.24(.45) | 3.56** | 2.36 | 1.84 | 1.28 |
| Friend approval - child | 4.56(.33) | 5.19(.37) | 5.42(.33) | 4.49(.32) | 3.02* | 0.05 | 0.19 | 5.23* |
| Parent approval - child | 3.35(.39) | 4.43(.44) | 4.97(.40) | 4.29(.38) | 3.02* | 3.34 [†] | 0.24 | 4.83* |
| Society approval - child | 4.09(.27) | 4.58(.31) | 4.57(.28) | 3.70(.27) | 2.23 [†] | 0.50 | 0.46 | 5.87* |

[†]*p* < .10*, **p* < .05, ***p* < .01.

Table 7.2 Descriptive and ANCOVA *F* statistics of the intergroup measures by condition, controlling for own cross-group dating and extended contact with cross-group couples

| | <u>Ingroup/Outgroup Approval</u> | | | | <i>Overall F</i> | <u><i>F</i> statistics</u> | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | 80/80 (<i>n</i> = 26) | 80/30 (<i>n</i> = 20) | 30/80 (<i>n</i> = 25) | 30/30 (<i>n</i> = 27) | | Ingroup Approval <i>F</i> | Outgroup Approval <i>F</i> | Interaction <i>F</i> |
| Violate trust | 2.76(.32) | 1.68(.37) | 1.49(.33) | 1.75(.32) | 2.40* | 3.19 | 1.50 | 3.96* |
| Take more than they give | 3.39(.37) | 2.13(.42) | 1.57(.38) | 2.01(.37) | 3.25** | 6.17* | 1.12 | 4.83* |
| Positive feelings | 5.33(.32) | 6.57(.36) | 6.57(.32) | 6.00(.31) | 2.92* | 1.03 | 1.04 | 7.64** |
| Sympathy | 2.30(.47) | 4.86(.53) | 3.42(.48) | 3.02(.46) | 2.87* | 0.54 | 4.93* | 9.22** |
| Other-group orientation | 3.07(.09) | 3.30(.10) | 3.41(.09) | 3.16(.09) | 3.17* | 1.03 | 0.01 | 6.66* |

p* < .05, *p* < .01.

7.5.1 Interpersonal measures

The 2 x 2 ANCOVAs illustrated in Table 7.1 reported eight significant F values, however, no significant main effects for either the ingroup norm manipulation or the outgroup norm manipulation were revealed, suggesting that the approval or disapproval of the separate groups did not impact on participants' relationship choices or their perceptions of approval of the relationship choices. Furthermore, no significant interactions of the ingroup and outgroup norms were found to influence the reported likelihoods of dating, having a romantic relationship with, or having a child with a South-Asian person, or on the perceived approvals to date or have a romantic relationship with a South-Asian person. Analyses did, however, reveal significant interaction effects on the perceived friend approval ($F(1,92) = 5.23, p = .02$), parental approval ($F(1,92) = 4.83, p = .03$), and societal approval to have a child with a South-Asian person ($F(1,92) = 5.87, p = .02$).

Simple main effects were used to explore the significant interactions on the perceived approvals to have a child with a South Asian person. These analyses found that participants who were primed to believe that both groups shared disapproving norms towards cross-group relationships (condition 30/30) perceived less societal support for having children with a South Asian person than participants who were primed with an article suggesting that the groups differed in their approvals (30/30 vs. 30/80: $F(1,92) = 5.09, p = .03$; and 30/30 vs. 80/30: $F(1,92) = 4.65, p = .03$). Furthermore, those who perceived both groups to espouse similar negative norms also perceived significantly less friend approval to have a child with a South Asian person than participants who viewed an article in which the outgroup

approved while the ingroup disapproved of cross-group relationships (30/80 vs. 30/30: $F(1,92) = 3.93, p = .05$).

In addition, simple main effects revealed that perceiving the ingroup and outgroup to share positive group norms towards cross-group relationships also had a detrimental impact on the perceived approval to have a child with a South Asian person. Specifically, participants who were primed to believe that both groups shared approving attitudes towards cross-group romantic relationships (condition 80/80) perceived less parental approval to have a child with a South Asian person than participants who viewed the 30/80 article ($F(1,92) = 8.52, p < .01$). Furthermore, participants who perceived groups to share positive norms were also likely to report marginally less parental approval to have a child with a South Asian person than participants in the 80/30 condition ($F(1,92) = 3.41, p = .07$), and marginally less friend approval to have a child with a South Asian person than participants in the 30/80 condition ($F(1,92) = 3.32, p = .07$).

These interpersonal results suggest that when participants perceived similar levels of support from both groups (either 30/30 or 80/80), they generally perceived less support to have a child with a South Asian person than when the groups differed in their support (either 30/80 or 80/30). In addition, when participants perceived the outgroup to approve of the relationship while the ingroup did not (30/80 condition), they generally perceived more approval to have a child with a South Asian person. Participants in this condition, for example, reported that having a child with a South Asian person would be met with more friend approval than participants in both 30/30 and 80/80 conditions, more parental approval than participants in 80/80 condition and more societal approval than participants in 30/30 condition.

7.5.2 Intergroup measures

Next, I examined the results of the 2 x 2 ANCOVAs on the intergroup measures illustrated in Table 7.2 and found two main effects on intergroup attitudes. The ingroup norm manipulation was found to influence the belief that South Asians take more than they give ($F(1,92) = 6.17, p = .02$), with the ingroup norm of approval (80% White approval) leading to a greater belief that South Asian people take more than they give ($M = 2.76, SD = .28$) than the ingroup norm of disapproval (30% White approval: $M = 1.79, SD = .26$). In addition, the outgroup norm manipulation influenced the sympathy felt towards South Asian people ($F(1,92) = 4.93, p = .03$), with the outgroup approval norm (80% South Asian approval) leading to less sympathy towards South Asian people ($M = 2.86, SD = .33$) than the disapproval outgroup norm (30% South Asian approval: $M = 3.94, SD = .35$).

Both of these main effects, however, were qualified by significant interactions: belief that South Asian people take more than they give ($F(1,92) = 4.83, p = .03$) and sympathy felt towards South Asian ($F(1,92) = 9.22, p < .01$). Moreover, significant interactions were also found for the other intergroup measures: belief that South Asian people violate trust ($F(1,92) = 3.96, p = .05$); positive feelings towards South Asian people ($F(1,92) = 7.64, p < .01$); and other-group orientation ($F(1,92) = 6.66, p = .01$).

Simple main effects showed that participants who viewed an article suggesting that both groups approved of cross-group romantic relationships (80/80) were more negative towards South Asian people than participants who viewed an article showing the groups to differ in their approval ratings (i.e., 30/80 and 80/30). Participants in the 80/80 condition believed that South Asian people violated trust to a greater extent than participants in both the 30/80 condition ($F(1,92) = 7.50, p < .01$) and 80/30 condition ($F(1,92) = 4.87, p = .03$); believed that South Asian people

take more than they give to a greater extent than participants in the 30/80 condition ($F(1,92) = 11.54, p < .01$) and 80/30 condition ($F(1,92) = 5.00, p = .03$), and reported less positive feelings towards South Asian people than participants in the 30/80 condition ($F(1,92) = 7.49, p < .01$) and 80/30 condition ($F(1,92) = 6.75, p = .01$).

In addition to the negative impact of perceiving groups to share similar positive norms, simple main effects revealed that the way in which the groups were perceived to differ in their approval also influenced outgroup attitudes. That is, when the ingroup was perceived to approve but the outgroup was perceived to disapprove (80/30), participants reported more sympathy towards South Asian people than when participants perceived similar norms (80/80 condition: $F(1,92) = 13.03, p < .01$; 30/30 condition: $F(1,92) = 6.76, p = .01$). Furthermore, when the ingroup was perceived to disapprove but the outgroup was perceived to approve (30/80), participants reported having a greater other-group orientation than participants in both similar norm conditions (80/80 condition: $F(1,92) = 6.79, p = .01$; 30/30 condition $F(1,92) = 3.82, p = .05$).

Similar to the interpersonal measures, then, these intergroup results suggest that when participants perceived their ingroup to share similar attitudes with the outgroup (e.g., 30/30 and 80/80), they reported less positive attitudes towards the outgroup than participants who perceived the groups to differ in their norms. This was especially evident when the norms were perceived to be positive (80/80). Furthermore, the results also illustrate that when group norms differ, the way in which they differ (i.e., which group approves and which does not), further influences intergroup attitudes.

7.6 Discussion

Using the contrasting predictions of intergroup contact theory (e.g., Allport, 1954; Wright et al., 1997) and social identity theory (e.g., Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & J. C. Turner, 1986), the present experiment investigated the intergroup and interpersonal consequences of perceived ingroup and outgroup norms towards cross-group romantic relationships. Despite having limited influence on the interpersonal measures concerning dating and long-term romantic relationships with an outgroup member, group norms were found to have a significant impact on the perceptions of approval for having a child with an outgroup member and, importantly, had a powerful influence on attitudes towards the outgroup in general. The majority of the results, moreover, supported the predictions of social identity theory and showed that similar group norms, even when positive, threatened group members and consequently led to greater discrimination against the outgroup (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996; 2001; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & J. C. Turner, 1986).

7.6.1 Interpersonal outcomes

In support of social identity theory, when the ingroup (White) and outgroup (South Asian) were shown to have the same norms towards cross-group romantic relationships, White individuals perceived less friend, parental, and societal approval to have a child with a South Asian person than when the two group norms were perceived to differ from one another. For example, when both groups were perceived to disapprove of cross-group romantic relationships (i.e., 30/30), participants reported less societal approval to have children with an outgroup member than when group norms differed. These participants also reported less friend approval to have a child with an outgroup member than when the ingroup disapproved and the outgroup approved (i.e., 30/80).

Although intergroup contact theory would also predict the above results by reasoning that negative norms result in negative attitudes (e.g., Allport, 1954; Wright et al., 1997), the intergroup contact theory fails to account for the other significant interpersonal outcomes. In particular, although intergroup contact theory can explain why disapproving norms led to negative interpersonal perceptions, it cannot explain why similar approving norms also resulted in negative perceptions. Indeed, intergroup contact theory suggests that when both groups hold positive norms towards intergroup contact, individuals will perceive endorsement of such contact, expect positive outcomes, and perceive that other group members will hold positive attitudes towards the outgroup. The significant interpersonal results, however, did not support this assertion. Instead, the results support the predictions of social identity theory (e.g., Tajfel, 1978).

The study revealed that when both groups were perceived to hold positive norms regarding cross-group romantic relationships, participants perceived less parental approval to have a child with an outgroup member than when the norms differed. In addition, similar to when both norms were negative, when both norms were positive, participants also perceived less friend approval to have a child with an outgroup member than when participants were led to believe that the ingroup disapproved and the outgroup approved of cross-group romantic contact. According to social identity theory, these findings illustrate that when group norms are perceived to be similar, even when the norms are positive, individuals attempt to differentiate the groups and distance themselves from the outgroup by reporting greater perceived disapproval towards cross-group contact (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996).

In addition to supporting social identity theory, the interpersonal results highlighted another notable trend. In particular, when participants perceived the outgroup to approve of cross-group relationships but the ingroup to disapprove

(30/80), they reported greater perceived approval from all three sources (friend, parental, or societal) to have a child with a South Asian person. These findings are intriguing because one might expect, consistent with intergroup contact theory (Hewstone & Swart, 2011), that the perceived approval of the ingroup would be a more powerful determinant of what participants perceive other ingroup members (friends and parents) to approve of than the perceived approval of the outgroup.

Nevertheless, employing the reciprocity principle to the data suggests that these associations are not entirely inexplicable. Specifically, according to the reciprocity principle, we like those who like us (e.g., Dittes, 1959). Applying this argument to the interpersonal findings suggests that when individuals believe that the outgroup holds positive attitudes towards intergroup contact, they subsequently believe that their ingroup, despite previously being against intergroup contact, will reciprocate and develop positive attitudes towards intergroup contact.

Another interesting finding from the experiment is that the general group norms were only found to significantly influence the perceptions of approval for having children with outgroup members. Notably, the group norms did not impact on the perceived approvals of less serious cross-group relationships. As having children with outgroup partners can distort group boundaries and can threaten important group based identities and customs (e.g., Uskul et al., 2007), these findings suggest that general group norms may only be important when cross-group relationships explicitly threaten existing group boundaries. Perceived approvals of less serious relationships, such as dating and longer-term relationships, may not be influenced by such norms because they may not be perceived to immediately threaten group boundaries.

In sum, although norms did not seem to play a significant role in determining the likelihood of engaging in three forms of cross-group romantic contact (dating,

relationships, procreating) or in the perceived approvals of cross-group dating or long-term relationships, perceived group norms did influence the perception of friend, parental, and societal approval for having a child with an outgroup member. Notably, the normative influences on the perceived approvals were consistent with social identity theory and illustrated that negative consequences occur when group norms are perceived to be similar compared to when the group norms are perceived to differ. In addition, the reciprocity principle may help to explain that when norms did differ, positive outgroup norms, but not positive ingroup norms, increased the perceived approval to have a child with an outgroup member.

7.6.2 Intergroup outcomes

The intergroup consequences of group norms in this experiment also support the social identity perspective (e.g., Tajfel, 1978). Group norms which differed from one another were found to produce more positive intergroup attitudes than when group norms were perceived to be the same, especially when the groups were perceived to hold similar *positive* norms towards cross-group romantic contact. When participants perceived both groups to hold the same positive or negative norms, for example, they reported less other group orientation than when the ingroup disapproved and the outgroup approved (30/80), and also reported less sympathy towards South Asian people than when the ingroup approved and the outgroup disapproved of cross-group romantic relationships (80/30).

Further to these findings and contrary to intergroup contact theory, participants who perceived both groups to approve of cross-group romantic relationships reported more negative intergroup attitudes than when participants perceived group norms to differ. Specifically, when both groups illustrated positive norms towards cross-group romantic contact, participants reported less positive

feelings towards South Asian people, perceived South Asian people to violate trust to a greater extent, and perceived South Asian people to take more than they give to a greater extent than participants who perceived group norms to differ in their approvals of cross-group romantic contact.

Interestingly, as violating trust and taking advantage of the ingroup are considered threat perceptions (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005), these findings fit particularly well with the social identity perspective (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996, 2001; Tajfel, 1978). The theory proposes that similar group norms threaten group identity, membership, and boundaries, and as a consequence promotes a greater amount of group differentiation which results in more negative attitudes towards intergroup contact and the outgroup. Consistent with this theory, the experimental results suggest that when groups are perceived to have similar norms towards cross-group romantic relationships, group members become threatened by the similarity which results in increased threat perception (violate trust and outgroup take more than they give), a greater need for intergroup distance (lower other-group orientation), and more negative attitudes towards the outgroup (less positive attitudes and sympathy for the outgroup).

In addition to supporting social identity theory, examining the intergroup outcomes of how perceived norms influence extended contact with cross-group relationships reveals further important findings. Notably, when the ingroup was perceived to disapprove and the outgroup to approve of cross-group romantic relationships, participants were more willing to engage in intergroup contact (other-group orientation). Similar to the interpersonal results, this finding may indicate that when outgroup norms are positive but the ingroup norms are negative, the positivity of outgroup norms may encourage reciprocity and consequently encourage

individuals to engage in intergroup contact, even though ingroup norms are currently against contact (reciprocity principle: Dittes, 1959).

Another interesting intergroup consequence of the current experiment was that perceiving the ingroup to approve but the outgroup to disapprove of cross-group romantic relationships resulted in participants reporting feeling more sympathy towards South Asians. As low quality relationships were found to promote compassionate feelings towards the entire outgroup in Study 4, this finding could be explained by similar principles. For example, perceiving outgroup partners to encounter greater levels of disapproval from their own group may elicit feelings of compassion, including sympathy, for those partners. Furthermore, as affective reactions towards individual members of groups are said to generalise to the entire group, the sympathy felt for the cross-group partner may generalise to feelings of sympathy towards South Asians as a group (e.g., Pettigrew, 1997).

In sum, the intergroup outcomes of perceived group norms towards cross-group contact revealed that different, as opposed to similar norms, produced beneficial intergroup outcomes. Consistent with social identity theory and contrary to intergroup contact theory, similar norms, especially when they were positive, seemed to threaten group distinctiveness, and consequently resulted in greater outgroup derogation (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996; Tajfel, 1978).

7.7 Implications

Despite being consistent with a long-standing social psychological theory (social identity theory: Tajfel, 1978), the findings of this present experiment could be considered troublesome. An important goal of intergroup relations research, arguably, is to reduce prejudice to enable richer, more satisfying interpersonal relationships, in a less discriminatory, more harmonious society. The results from

this experiment, however, suggests that if we achieve this aim and distinct groups in society become less prejudicial and more approving of intergroup contact, individuals will feel threatened, reject intergroup contact, and consequently regress to endorsing more negative attitudes towards having children with outgroup members and more negative intergroup attitudes in general.

However, there are also some more optimistic implications of these findings. Firstly, individuals reported positive intergroup and interpersonal attitudes when group norms were perceived to differ from one another. This is important because a commonly held perception in the UK is that ethnic groups do distinctly differ from one another on many dimensions such as religion, language, pastimes, culture, and norms (e.g., Fletcher, 2010). Although these perceived, or actual, differences have sometimes been used to explain negative intergroup attitudes (e.g., metacontrast principle: J. C. Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), this experiment suggests that these different norms may, in fact, reduce perceived threat and promote less prejudicial attitudes in society, provided that one group is perceived to hold positive norms towards this form of contact.

Another, alternative examination of this experiment also suggests that the results may not be as pessimistic as first thought. Although group norms have been found to influence intergroup and interpersonal attitudes in this experiment and others (e.g., Jetten et al, 1996; Tajfel, 1978), it has been previously argued that the similarity of non-manipulated group norms in real-life field studies produce positive, not negative, intergroup attitudes (R. Brown & Abrams, 1986). This argument suggests that similarity of group norms may result in negative attitudes in experiments such as this one; however, similar norms in real-life settings may actually promote positive interpersonal and intergroup attitudes and experiences (R. Brown & Abrams, 1986).

A possible reason for the different outcomes of experimental and field research is the way that perceived norms are measured and manipulated. In cross-sectional research, group norms usually comprise of the attitudes and approvals of ingroup members who are close to the participants (e.g., friends and family) rather than the perceived opinion of the entire group (e.g., De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; R. N. Turner et al., 2008). In experiments, however, it is difficult to realistically manipulate the attitudes and opinions of known others, and as a result the attitudes and opinions of the entire group are often conceptualised as group norms (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996, 2001). This distinction is particularly important because the attitudes, approval, and experiences of known ingroup members, such as friends and family, are more powerful in determining individual's behaviours than the norms of an entire group (e.g., Felmlee, 2001; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2007).

7.8 Limitations and future directions

In addition to the disputed generalisability of experimental norm research (e.g., R. Brown & Abrams, 1986), there are other aspects and limitations of this research which may benefit from further research. Group identity, in terms of strength and status, is one such factor. Specifically, the strength of group identity has been acknowledged as an important factor in both intergroup attitudes (e.g., Gomez et al., 2011; Jetten et al., 1996) and interpersonal choices (e.g., L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Uskul et al., 2007). The stronger a person identifies with a group, the more likely they are to conform to group norms and report greater ingroup bias in terms of intergroup attitudes and relationship choices (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996; Uskul et al., 2007). As this experiment aimed to make group memberships salient, it is conceivable that group identity was heightened in the study, making participants

more susceptible to group processes and norms than perhaps they would be in a non-experimental setting (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996; Uskul et al., 2007).

Another limitation of the current experiment is that only White individuals participated and these participants only reported their attitudes towards one outgroup (South Asian people). As minority and majority group members differ in the extent to which they identify with their groups and how they are influenced by ingroup and outgroup norms (e.g., L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Gomez et al., 2011; Uskul et al., 2007), further experiments using minority group members may result in different outcomes. For example, as minority group members are influenced by ingroup norms (e.g., Brown et al., 2003; Uskul et al., 2007) and outgroup norms (Gomez et al., 2011) to a greater extent than majority group members, it is plausible that the effects of group norms on attitudes would be stronger for minority group members than the White majority group members used in this present study. Relatedly, as different groups elicit different attitudes (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005), studying the attitudes towards a variety of different groups would further benefit the research by investigating its generalisability to other participants and other groups.

A further aspect of the research which may limit its generalisability is the preponderance of female participants. Although unintentional, having such a high number of females in the sample (78%) may have distorted the experimental findings. White females, for example, receive and perceive greater pressure than White males not to enter into cross-group romantic relationships, especially relationships which may produce children (e.g., Miller et al., 2004). It is possible, therefore, that because White males do not encounter the same pressure against forming cross-group romantic relationships, the current findings may not be replicated with a sample including a greater number of males.

7.9 Summary

Expanding upon the findings of previous studies in this thesis, the results of Study 5 indicate that ingroup and outgroup norms, and importantly their interaction, has a significant impact upon intergroup and interpersonal attitudes. Consistent with social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978) and contrary to intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954; Wright et al., 1997), the results suggest that it is the similarity of group norms which influences intergroup and interpersonal attitudes. Group norms which are perceived to be similar appear to threaten group members, resulting in negative intergroup attitudes even when the groups are perceived to share positive norms.

Although future research is needed to investigate how the interaction of non-manipulated group norms influence intergroup attitudes and interpersonal preferences in applied settings, the findings of the experiment, taken together with the rest of the thesis, highlight the importance of studying cross-group romantic relationships. Such investigations illustrate that these unique relationships are not only influenced by norms and reactions, these relationships and their associated qualities can also impact upon intergroup attitudes and interpersonal preferences. In the next chapter, I highlight these qualities and conclude the thesis by discussing the key findings, together with the theoretical and practical implications of investigating cross-group romantic relationships as a form of intergroup contact.

Chapter 8

Summary and conclusions

Expanding upon intergroup contact theory and interpersonal relationships research, this thesis investigated the interpersonal perceptions and intergroup attitudes associated with cross-group romantic relationships. Across five studies, I investigated the interpersonal characteristics and qualities of cross-group romantic relationships, together with the interpersonal and intergroup attitudes of individuals who have had direct and extended contact with such relationships. The findings, which are discussed in detail below, illustrate that cross-group romantic relationships are a unique form of intergroup contact which have distinct influences on interpersonal perceptions and relationships, and intergroup attitudes and relations. Accordingly, investigations into this form of intergroup contact have important consequences for the partners involved in cross-group romantic relationships and for society in general.

8.1 Key findings

8.1.1 Interpersonal characteristics

Consistent with previous research, the findings of this thesis consistently revealed a strong group preference for romantic partners, with ingroup members being significantly and pervasively preferred as romantic partners than outgroup members (Studies 1, 2, and 3). This ingroup bias, moreover was also evident in the perceived approval of hypothetical (Studies 1 and 3) and actual relationships (Study 2). That is, individuals not only preferred ingroup partners, they also perceived there

to be far greater approval of relationships with ingroup members than relationships with outgroup members.

The disapproval of cross-group relationships was also found to predict the perception of such relationships. Notably, individuals who knew of a cross-group relationship rated the couples as less satisfied, less invested in, and as having more appealing alternatives to their relationships compared to same-group relationships (Study 3). Nevertheless, despite acknowledging greater levels of disapproval towards their relationships, actual cross-group partners rated their relationships to be of similar quality to same-group relationships (Study 2). Furthermore, in Study 4 cross-group partners were perceived to be more satisfied with their relationships and more trusting of their partners than same-group partners.

The inconsistent perceptions of cross-group relationships found in the current studies support previous interpersonal research which has reported mixed assessments of cross-group romantic relationships when compared to same-group relationships (e.g., Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; H. Wang et al., 2004). In some studies, for example, cross-group relationships are reported to be of higher quality than same-group relationships (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006), while other research suggests that cross-group relationships are less satisfying than same-group relationships (H. Wang et al., 2004).

The inconsistency of the results may be explained by the compensation hypothesis (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006). According to this hypothesis, cross-group partners report and are sometimes perceived to have higher quality relationships to compensate for the disapproval they receive. That is, to make their relationships worth defying the objections from family, friends, and even society, cross-group partners need to believe that their relationship and partner is worth the trouble. Consequently, their relationships, or the perception of their relationships, are

enhanced to offset the detrimental effects of familial, friend and societal disapproval.

Although this compensation hypothesis may enhance perceptions of cross-group relationships in the short term, such compensation may not be sufficient to offset the negative effects of disapproval in the long term. Specifically, although cross-group partners in Study 2 reported similar relationship quality to same-group partners, a significantly higher proportion of cross-group relationships had ended compared to same-group relationships. This suggests that although cross-group partners could compensate for the lack of approval in believing their relationship was just as satisfying as a same-group relationship, the disapproval and related obstacles this causes the couple may have ultimately caused the relationship to break up, thus illustrating the negative impact disapproval can have on relationships.

The long term effect of disapproval may also help to explain the different findings of the cross-sectional and experimental studies examining extended contact. In Study 3, for example, cross-group couples were perceived to be less satisfying than same-group relationships, yet in Study 4 cross-group partners were perceived as being more satisfied with their relationships than same-group partners. These seemingly contradictory results may be due to the combination of compensation and the length of time participants knew of the relationships. When cross-group relationships first begin, for example, the relationships may initially be perceived to be worth defying friends and family members. This process is apparent in Study 4 where participants do not personally know the relationships. If the disapproval continues, however, this can place the relationships under great stress, ultimately having an adverse effect on the relationships, and leading others to perceive such relationships more negatively. This process, then, may explain the negative

perceptions of cross-group couples in Study 3 and the higher break up rates of cross-group relationships in Study 2.

In sum, the findings from this thesis suggest that cross-group romantic relationships are relatively rare and significantly disapproved of. This disapproval, moreover, may have an adverse impact on the relationships. Notably, although the relationships may be initially compensated for the lack of approval by enhanced perceptions of relationship quality, the disapproval may ultimately impact upon the relationship, thereby limiting the quality and longevity of such relationships.

8.1.2 Intergroup and interpersonal attitudes

In addition to investigating the perceptions and qualities of cross-group romantic relationships, I also examined the associations between intergroup and interpersonal attitudes and having direct and extended contact with this form of intergroup contact. In this section, I will summarise those associations while also highlighting the importance of perceived group norms and contact quality.

8.1.2.1 Direct cross-group romantic contact

In recognising that cross-group romantic relationships are a form of intergroup contact, I investigated how being in a romantic relationship with an outgroup member predicted interpersonal and intergroup attitudes. As described above, cross-group partners and same-group partners reported that their relationships were of similar quality to one another. Cross-group partners, however, perceived far greater disapproval of their relationships from significant others which could have contributed to the higher termination rate evident in the sample.

On the intergroup level, cross-group partners reported greater other group orientation and more cross-group friendships than same-group partners (Study 2). Nevertheless, although being in a cross-group relationship predicted more time with

the outgroup, being in such a relationship did not seem to predict intergroup attitudes or affective reactions. This was particularly surprising because cross-group friendships via a known mediator, intergroup anxiety, did predict positive intergroup attitudes on all the measures used in Study 2 (e.g., Stephan & Stephan, 1985; R. N. Turner et al., 2007b). As cross-group partners also spent more time with outgroup friends, these results suggest that there is something about cross-group relationships that inhibit or nullify positive attitudes from emerging from romantic contact. Although the study was unable to identify what characteristics of cross-group romantic relationships account for the ambivalent attitudes, factors such as the typicality of partners, disapproval of the relationship, and increased intergroup anxiety may play important roles.

Combining these findings, then, suggests that cross-group romantic relationships not only encounter greater levels of disapproval, but may also fail to produce the same positive intergroup outcomes associated with other forms of intergroup contact, including cross-group friendships. These different outcomes highlight the obstacles cross-group couples face and illustrate the unique qualities and consequences of being in a cross-group romantic relationship.

8.1.2.2 Extended cross-group romantic contact

In addition to investigating the predictors and associations of direct romantic contact with outgroup members, I also examined how just knowing a cross-group romantic relationship was associated with interpersonal and intergroup attitudes. As described above (section 8.1.1), Study 3 revealed that cross-group relationships were perceived more negatively than same-group relationships in terms of the approval they received and the perceived quality of the relationships. Nevertheless, having extended contact with such relationships was associated with positive intergroup and

interpersonal outcomes. Knowing a cross-group partner predicted more personal openness to cross-group dating, more approval of others dating outgroup members, more positive attitudes towards an outgroup, and more positive attitudes towards intergroup contact in general. Moreover, in support of the extended contact hypothesis (Wright et al., 1997), these positive outcomes were mediated by perceived ingroup norms.

Expanding upon this cross-sectional finding, two experiments further investigated how extended contact with cross-group relationships influence attitudes. Study 4, when combined with the cross-sectional findings from Study 3, indicated that having extended contact, regardless of the quality of the cross-group relationship, promoted positive interpersonal and intergroup outcomes compared to having no such contact. Even when a cross-group romantic relationship was viewed to be dissatisfying, for example, participants reported greater feelings of compassion for the outgroup. Moreover, the results of Study 4 also illustrated the importance of group norms. Specifically, having extended contact with a high quality, satisfying cross-group relationship predicted more openness to relationships with outgroup members by increasing the perceived norms of approval towards such relationships.

Building upon the importance of norms illustrated in Studies 3 and 4, Study 5 investigated how the perception of ingroup and outgroup norms further impacted upon the extended contact outcomes. Consistent with social identity theory, the experiment revealed that when the norms were perceived to be similar, individuals were threatened by the similarity and exhibited greater ingroup bias than when the norms were perceived to be different (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996). Although previous research suggests that the results of the experiment may not be applicable to real-world situations (e.g., R. Brown & Abrams, 1986), the results do illustrate, yet

again, the importance of group norms in intergroup contact and interpersonal preferences.

Combining all the studies, then, suggests that there are positive and negative outcomes associated with cross-group romantic contact. On the negative side, cross-group romantic relationships encounter greater levels of disapproval and, as a result, are perceived more negatively than same-group partners. Furthermore, unlike other forms of direct intergroup contact (e.g., cross-group friendships), having direct romantic contact with an outgroup member was not associated with positive intergroup attitudes. Nevertheless, cross-group romantic relationships were found to be positively associated with intergroup and interpersonal attitudes for people who knew of the relationships. Specifically, despite the ambivalent attitudes associated with direct contact and the negative perceptions of the relationships, extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships predicted positive intergroup and interpersonal attitudes in a similar way to other forms of intergroup contact. In sum, it seems that cross-group romantic relationships are associated with beneficial intergroup and interpersonal attitudes and outcomes, but not, ironically, for the partners involved in such relationships.

8.2 Theoretical implications

As this thesis unites the interpersonal relationships and intergroup relations fields, the findings from the current studies make important theoretical contributions to both of these domains.

8.2.1 Interpersonal relationships

In support of previous interpersonal research, the current investigations attest to the pervasiveness and universality of ingroup romantic preferences. Notably,

similar to previous research conducted in the US (L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006, 2007; W. Wang et al., 2012) and Canada (Uskul et al., 2007), the current research suggests that cross-group romantic relationships in Britain are not only rare, they are significantly disapproved of and are perceived relatively negatively compared to the much preferred ingroup romantic relationships. In addition, the present research documented important unique preferences for romantic partners from certain outgroups over others in Britain that are distinct from romantic preferences in other countries (e.g., W. Wang, 2012). Together these findings suggest that although there is a widespread endogamic norm that has an extremely powerful influence on individuals' romantic choices, preferences for certain types of cross-group romantic relationships are specific to different countries.

In addition to identifying romantic group preferences in Britain, the current research also provides support for the interpersonal relationships literature by investigating the interpersonal outcomes of cross-group romantic relationships. Similar to research in other countries, cross-group partners in Britain were found to have similar relationship qualities to same-group partners (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; Study 2). Others' perceptions of the relationships, however, were hampered by the perceived disapproval towards the relationships (Study 3), which may have also accounted for cross-group couples' higher termination rate (Study 2; H. Wang et al., 2004). By illustrating that the interpersonal outcomes of cross-group relationships in Britain are similar to cross-group relationships elsewhere, these particular findings highlight the commonality of interpersonal norms, reactions, and processes.

More importantly, this research also expanded upon previous literature by investigating how cross-group romantic relationships influence others' openness to

enter into cross-group relationships. Interestingly, knowing a cross-group partner predicted favourable attitudes towards cross-group relationships and personal openness to such relationships. These findings suggest that as more people enter these relationships, more people will know of these relationships, so attitudes towards such relationships will improve. This, in turn, will reduce the disapproval and related negative perceptions towards cross-group couples and also encourage more people to enter the relationships.

From a theoretical standpoint, this research contributes to the interpersonal literature by illustrating the universality of ingroup romantic preference, the commonality of interpersonal processes, and that preferences for outgroups are unique to specific countries. Moreover, the current research further expands upon the literature by indicating that romantic preferences are significantly influenced by others' romantic choices.

8.2.2 Intergroup relations

The most significant contribution of the research reported in this thesis is to the intergroup relations domain. Notably, the research broadens the scope of intergroup contact to include cross-group romantic relationships, a form of intergroup contact that has previously received scant regard. Indeed, in over 50 years of research, intergroup contact theorists have seemingly studied every variety of contact, including strangers, acquaintances, neighbours, classmates, teammates, colleagues, roommates, and friendships, yet have inexplicably omitted romantic relationships from their remit. This research addressed this omission and highlighted the necessity to include romantic relationships as a form of intergroup contact.

In addition to broadening the scope of intergroup contact theory, I also examined the extent to which intergroup contact theory explains cross-group

romantic contact. As interracial romantic relationships were illegal in many states in the US when Allport (1954) first proposed the contact hypothesis (e.g., *Loving vs. Virginia*, 1967), intergroup romantic contact was unlikely to have driven the hypothesis. Nevertheless, research from this thesis suggests that the theory and related hypotheses (e.g., Wright et al., 1997), are somewhat applicable to cross-group romantic relationships. Vicarious contact with cross-group romantic relationships, for example, was found to be associated with positive intergroup attitudes and personal openness to cross-group romantic relationships via perceived ingroup norms. Such findings illustrate that extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships is similar to extended contact with other forms of intergroup contact because it not only promotes favourable attitudes via norms, it also helps to prepare individuals for such contact (i.e., personal openness; R. N. Turner et al., 2008). Importantly, the research also illustrates the utility of intergroup contact theory to be applied to situations that it was not initially intended for.

The findings of the direct romantic contact study, however, suggest that romantic contact may not be fully explained by intergroup contact theory (Study 2). As friendships and romantic relationships are similar to one another and satisfy the majority of the optimal conditions for intergroup contact (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998), these forms of intergroup contact should reap similar positive intergroup outcomes. In this research, however, cross-group friendships were found to predict positive intergroup attitudes, yet cross-group romantic relationships showed no such positive association (Study 2). This finding not only illustrates the uniqueness of cross-group romantic contact, it also indicates that intergroup contact theory may not fully explain this form of contact. Nevertheless, other explanations including subtyping of the cross-group partner, negative attitudes prior to the formation of cross-group relationships, or increased intergroup anxiety as a

consequence of meeting the family and friends of the outgroup partner may all help to explain why cross-group romantic contact does not lead to the positive outcomes predicted by intergroup contact theory.

Another interesting finding which contributes to the field of intergroup relations is that extended cross-group romantic contact, but not direct cross-group romantic contact, was associated with positive intergroup attitudes. Previous researchers have suggested that direct contact between members of different groups should elicit more positive intergroup outcomes because the contact is personal and, therefore, more reliable and memorable (e.g., R. N. Turner et al., 2007b). Nevertheless, other researchers have found that it is extended contact that produces more positive intergroup attitudes than direct contact (e.g., De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010; Paolini et al., 2007; R. N. Turner et al., 2008, 2007a).

Although the reasons for why extended contact is sometimes found to promote more positive intergroup attitudes than direct contact are still not known, it has been suggested that extended contact is more powerful when there is a lack of direct contact (e.g., R. N. Turner et al., 2008) and when the approval of the ingroup is important to the individual (De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010). Combining these arguments suggests that extended contact with a cross-group couple may be associated with more positive intergroup attitudes because people are less likely to have direct romantic contact and the negative perceptions of others are less meaningful than when individuals are actually engaged in cross-group romantic contact. For those involved in the relationships, however, the lack of approval they receive from the ingroup may negate the positive outcomes that could be associated with this form of direct contact (e.g., De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010).

In sum, by illustrating the similarities and differences between this form of intergroup contact and other forms of contact, together with identifying the unique

qualities and outcomes of cross-group romantic contact, this research makes a significant contribution to the intergroup relations domain. In addition, the findings of this research also calls into question whether extended or direct contact are more powerful in promoting positive intergroup attitudes. Such research, furthermore, provides impetus, direction, and an ideal foundation for intergroup contact theorists to explore the unique form of cross-group romantic contact.

8.3 Limitations

Given that this was an initial examination into the interpersonal and intergroup outcomes of cross-group romantic relationships, there are limitations of the research that need to be addressed. As discussed in the empirical chapters, the use of certain participants, specific groups, and the focus on a particular outgroup may limit the current findings. Due to practical reasons, the participants, for example, were all White, living in Britain, and the large majority were female and university students. Although the recruitment of these participants enabled me to identify the interpersonal and intergroup outcomes for that particular group, in addition to saving both time and money attempting to recruit a more diverse participant pool, this selection of participants does limit the generalisability of the research. In particular, romantic choices and the effects of intergroup contact have been found to be influenced by ethnicity (e.g., L. M. Brown et al., 2003; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Lalonde et al., 2007; Lee & Gudykunst, 2001; Levin et al., 2007; Uskul et al., 2011), minority/majority group status (e.g., Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005), gender (e.g., Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Golebiowska, 2007; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Johnson & Jacobson, 2005; Miller et al., 2004), age (Golebiowska, 2007; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Johnson & Jacobson, 2005; Uskul et al., 2011; H. Wang & Kao, 2007), and education (e.g., Golebiowska, 2007; Herman & Campbell,

2012). As such, further research conducted with participants who differed from those examined here may elicit different findings. Nevertheless, as ingroup bias is a universally pervasive influence on romantic choices and intergroup contact theory has been applied to many different countries, cultures, and peoples, the findings may not necessarily be limited to the current participants.

As ethnicity is a visible and important group identity, I chose to use ethnic groups to investigate cross-group romantic relationships. Specifically, as they are the largest non-mixed ethnic groups in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2005), White participants generally evaluated Black and South Asian as the target groups. This is, however, limiting. First, to save participants time, I did not include other ethnic groups for evaluation (e.g., Chinese people), and only focused on South Asians in the extended contact studies. Second, ethnic groups are broad terms encapsulating many different subgroups with different histories, cultures, and norms. Black, for example, includes individuals who identify as Black African, Black Caribbean, and Black Other. Finally, the term cross-group relationship also includes inter-faith relationships, inter-national relationships, and inter-class relationships, among others. Although all these types of partnerships are considered to be cross-group relationships, they all have unique characteristics which may, in turn, elicit different interpersonal and intergroup consequences. As such, the focus on only three ethnic groups in the UK, although a good starting point, may hinder the generalisability of the findings to other types of cross-group relationships.

Another difficulty that emerged in conducting this research is the relative rarity of ethnic cross-group romantic relationships. Of the 312 participants who participated in Studies 1 and 2, only 19 individuals had dated a South Asian person and only 19 had dated a Black person. Similarly, only 25 of the 99 participants in Study 3 knew a White person in a relationship with a South Asian person. This not

only makes it difficult to recruit people who have had direct or extended contact with a cross-group romantic relationship, it also suggests that inter-ethnic relationships may be significantly different to other forms of cross-group romantic relationships which are more common.

Another possible issue with the current research is that different operationalisations of extended contact were used throughout the study. Consistent with previous cross-sectional studies assessing other forms of intergroup contact (e.g., R. N. Turner et al., 2007b), the cross-sectional studies in this thesis investigated personal contact, as opposed to hypothetical contact, with cross-group romantic relationships (Studies 1, 2, and 3). Although this measurement is preferred as extended contact is thought to promote more positive attitudes when the contact involves ingroup members who are well known and respected (e.g., friends or family; Wright et al., 1997), this operationalisation was not feasible for the experiments. Indeed, it would be difficult and even unethical to make participants' friends or family enter into a cross-group romantic relationship for the sake of an experiment.

Necessarily, then, similar to previous developmental studies (e.g., Cameron & Rutland, 2006), the current experimental studies operationalised extended contact as contact with fictional, unknown ingroup members in cross-group romantic relationships via a relationship questionnaire (Study 4) and a magazine article (Study 5). This different operationalisation, however, may have had a different impact on intergroup attitudes compared to the operationalisation used in the cross-sectional studies. Specifically, as previously noted, extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships involving known ingroup members may have a more significant impact on attitudes than extended contact involving unknown, fictional group members (Wright et al., 1997). Nevertheless, although future studies could

explore the impact of these different operationalisations, as previous researchers have used these operationalisations interchangeably, the different operationalisations used in the cross-sectional and experimental studies may not have a major impact on the findings of this thesis.

The correlational nature of several of the reported studies means that it is not always possible to infer causal direction between the variables examined. In Study 3, for example, it could be that intergroup attitudes predicted the contact rather than the reverse, or that other unstudied variables accounted for the influence of contact on intergroup attitudes. Although I used a variety of measures and employed experimental study designs in an attempt to disentangle this causation problem, longitudinal research which evaluated more measures would have been best equipped to detail the processes by which cross-group romantic contact influences intergroup and interpersonal outcomes. In Study 2, for example, the ambivalent intergroup attitudes held by cross-group partners may not have been nullified by their experiences in a cross-group relationship as I hypothesised, but may have actually been negative at the start of the relationship and were subsequently improved by their romantic contact. Implementing longitudinal research with a vast range of measures, then, would help identify the important changes in attitudes together with the processes by which contact influences attitudes and vice-versa. Given that this was the first in depth examination into cross-group romantic contact, however, it was crucial to first lay the ground work, identifying an association between romantic contact and a number of interpersonal and intergroup outcomes. The correlational and experimental studies conducted here provide a strong foundation from which subsequent research on the topic can be conducted.

In sum, the shortcomings of this research provide useful insights into the potential direction of future research in this new area of investigation. For example,

investigating different forms and combinations of cross-group relationships with different participants from different countries would help to establish the generalisability of the current findings. Longitudinal research, furthermore, could be employed to investigate how and when cross-group relationships impact on both interpersonal and intergroup outcomes. Such research, for example, could follow cross-group partners through life events (e.g., relationship to engagement, to marriage, to children, to divorce) and investigate how these relationship transitions influence both their and their friends and families' attitudes towards cross-group romantic relationships and intergroup attitudes in general. This research, furthermore, would significantly add to both the interpersonal relationships and intergroup relations domains, while also providing information which may help individuals within cross-group couples to overcome the unique obstacles they face, and help others to accept and support these potentially group threatening relationships.

8.4 Applications

The findings of the current research have practical implications for a wide range of people. In particular, applying the findings of the current research could benefit cross-group romantic partners, people who know of cross-group couples, and society in general.

8.4.1 Cross-group partners

The interpersonal findings from this thesis highlight practical applications that can be implemented to help cross-group partners. Specifically, the knowledge accumulated in this research could be applied to inform techniques used in programmes such as couples counselling and therapy to help cross-group partners in

their relationships. Notably, as the research emphasises the unique challenges and needs of cross-group romantic partners, the research would help alert practitioners to the obstacles these couples face and provide them with the knowledge to help cross-group partners.

In particular, although cross-group partners are likely to be well aware that their relationships are perceived relatively negatively and encounter disapproval from their friends and family, they may not realise that most cross-group relationships encounter disapproval. If practitioners informed the partners that their relationships are generally disapproved of because of their cross-group status, rather than any individual quality of their relationship or partner, the partners may be reassured of their relationship and partner. The reassurance, furthermore, could help partners dismiss the disapproval they face as by product of prejudice, thereby preventing them from questioning their relationship and partner and relieving some of the stress and scrutiny their relationship encounters. Consequently, this may help the partners to develop positive healthy relationships without the burden of disapproval.

Counselling and therapy techniques could also encourage cross-group partners by revealing that their relationships are helping to erode prejudice. Notably, by knowing that they are breaking down barriers and promoting acceptance of these relationships, cross-group partners may be encouraged to continue with their relationships as they are likely to face less discrimination and disapproval in the future. Furthermore, by acknowledging that they have to overcome these barriers, the couples may recognise that they will become stronger as a unit and once the prejudice has lessened, they will be able to develop more satisfying, rewarding, and long lasting relationships.

Relatedly, as cross-group romantic relationships improve the attitudes of others, explaining the findings of the current thesis to cross-group couples may also provide them with satisfaction. Specifically, knowing that they are not only helping to break down barriers towards their own relationships, but their relationships help to reduce prejudice towards all cross-group relationships and promote positive general intergroup attitudes may also encourage cross-group couples. Indeed, facilitating others' romantic relationships, whilst also reducing societal intolerance and prejudice, may provide cross-group couples with a broader perspective in which they realise that it is not only their relationships they are helping, they are also having a positive effect on society as a whole.

In sum, applying the findings of the current thesis to techniques used to help romantic couples suggests positive implications for cross-group couples. In particular, if practitioners can highlight that all cross-group relationships face prejudice, cross-group couples may become unburdened by the disapproval they personally encounter, thereby helping to promote more satisfying relationships. In addition, these techniques may also help cross-group partners to feel proud that their relationships not only break down barriers for their own relationships, but they facilitate others' relationships and help to promote positive intergroup attitudes and relations in society in general.

8.4.2 Society

In addition to helping cross-group romantic couples, applying the current findings to interventions that could be used in the media and schools also has positive implications for society in general. The findings from the extended contact studies, for example, suggest that if individuals view more examples of cross-group relationships, their intergroup attitudes will improve. Applying this to practical

interventions, then, suggests that increased portrayals of cross-group couples in schools and the media, including film, television, newspapers, and advertisements, may help to improve society's attitudes towards cross-group relationships and intergroup attitudes and relations in general.

Interventions in schools, for example, could replicate previous interventions that have been successfully used to reduce prejudice towards outgroups, such as disabled people (e.g., L. Cameron & Rutland, 2006). For instance, school children could read and learn about cross-group couples. According to the current research and previous studies (e.g., L. Cameron & Rutland, 2006), this extended contact would not only raise awareness of cross-group couples, it would improve the children's attitudes towards such couples and intergroup attitudes in general, especially if the couples were presented in a positive light.

Similar to the developmental approach with children, interventions could also be implemented with adults. Positive portrayals of cross-group relationships in soap operas, films, advertisements, amongst other media would help break down the taboo of cross-group relationships and help promote positive attitudes towards such relationships. In addition, as media coverage tends to be extremely large scale, such interventions would be able to reach and positively influence many more people than the usual, relatively small scale psychology interventions.

Although I do not know of any social psychological research which has attempted to alter attitudes towards cross-group relationships using media portrayals, there are notable examples of media which have attempted to improve attitudes towards cross-group relationships. The film *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (Kramer & Rose, 1967) was released in the same year that laws banning interracial relationships were made unconstitutional in the US (*Loving vs. Virginia*, 1967). The film portrayed a romantic relationship between a White woman and Black man in

the US and showed the reactions of their friends, family and society. Notably, as the relationship in the film was portrayed positively, it suggests that the film attempted to not only raise awareness of interracial romantic relationships, it also attempted to improve attitudes towards the relationships in a pivotal and historical era for race relations in the US.

Today, some areas of the media continue to try to break down barriers towards cross-group romantic relationships. United Colors of Benetton, for example, continue to run advertisement campaigns highlighting interracial relationships, among other socially taboo subjects (United Colors of Benetton, n.d). These advertisements not only illustrate the products of the company, they also raise awareness of such relationships with the aim of promoting more tolerance towards them (United Colors of Benetton, n.d.).

Although the intergroup outcomes and influences of both the advertisement and film have not been recorded, the current research suggests that such media portrayals may promote positive intergroup attitudes and relations. In addition, these real world examples also illustrate how one could apply the extended contact findings of the current research to design school-based and media-based interventions to reduce prejudice. Specifically, by portraying more cross-group couples in media and books, extended contact with cross-group relationships would increase. This extended contact, furthermore, would increase norms of approval towards these relationships which, in turn, would promote positive attitudes towards cross-group romantic contact that would generalise to positive intergroup attitudes. In sum, applying the current findings suggests that discrimination towards cross-group couples and prejudice in general could be reduced by increasing extended contact with cross-group couples via simple interventions in schools and the media.

8.5 Summary

Recognising a significant gap in the intergroup contact literature, in this thesis I combined interpersonal relationships research with intergroup contact theory in order to investigate the interpersonal and intergroup outcomes of cross-group romantic relationships. Specifically, the research examined romantic group preferences, the association of direct and extended cross-group romantic contact on attitudes, and the influence of group norms and contact quality on the association between extended contact and attitudes. The results revealed important outcomes that make important theoretical contributions to both the interpersonal relationships and intergroup relations domains. In addition, the findings also provide suggestions for practical interventions that may have significant implications for cross-group couples and society in general.

The interpersonal results of the studies conducted reveal that cross-group romantic relationships are relatively rare and typically disapproved of. Furthermore, this disapproval is negatively associated with the perceptions of cross-group romantic relationships. Nevertheless, the disapproval does not seem to predict the quality of cross-group partnerships, though it may account for the higher dissolution rates of cross-group relationships. These findings suggest that ingroup romantic preferences and biases are universal in nature and that cross-group couples encounter unique levels of disapproval and obstacles. Moreover, they imply that cross-group couples need to be aware of the specific problems they face in order for them to protect themselves from prejudice and help solidify their relationships, perhaps by seeking guidance from a counsellor or therapist trained to understand the problems associated with cross-group relationships. Such research led interventions may benefit cross-group partners as they will be more aware and better equipped to

protect their relationships from discrimination, thereby giving them a better opportunity to develop satisfying relationships with one another.

Regarding the intergroup outcomes of the research, this is, to my knowledge, the first examination of cross-group romantic relationships as a form of intergroup contact. Importantly, this research opens up a new avenue of intergroup contact research, and together with the findings of the studies, expands the realm of intergroup relations. The findings of the research, for instance, indicate that although extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships are similar to other forms of extended contact, direct romantic contact is unique. That is, although knowing a cross-group partner is negatively associated with prejudice as intergroup contact theory would predict, having direct cross-group romantic contact is unique in that it is associated with ambivalent attitudes.

The findings of the current study not only contribute to theory by expanding the scope of intergroup contact theory, the findings also have important implications for society. Specifically, as extended contact with cross-group romantic relationships was found to predict positive intergroup attitudes, simple interventions that raise awareness and increase contact with cross-group couples could be implemented to reduce prejudice in society. School interventions and media portrayals, for example, could be implemented to increase extended contact that could be used to promote positive attitudes towards cross-group couples, and positive intergroup attitudes and relations in general.

Acknowledging that more individuals are entering into romantic relationships with partners from different social groups, this research is also important because the outcomes of such contact are becoming increasingly relevant and essential to society. Indeed, as these relationships can alter intergroup attitudes,

and even blur important group boundaries, studies such as the current research are needed to understand just how these relationships impact upon a changing society.

Further research is crucial if we are to fully understand this unique form of intergroup contact. This might involve the employment of longitudinal designs to evaluate how cross-group romantic contact influences intergroup and interpersonal outcomes over time. This research would not only add to the current findings by revealing how norms, attitudes, and reactions change towards the relationships, but could also be applied to helping cross-group partners develop healthy relationships and ensure that the relationships have a positive influence on society.

Taken together, then, the findings, contributions, and applications of the present research are important on numerous levels for both the interpersonal relationships and intergroup relations domains. Notably, the research expands on both domains and provides an important insight into this unique form of intergroup contact. More importantly, the research has practical implications which can promote positive intergroup and interpersonal attitudes that can benefit both cross-group couples and society in general.

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Appendix A

Quality of contact experimental primes

A.1 Example of female partner questionnaire

Relationship Quality Study

1. Relationship Quality

Please answer the following question about your partner or ex-partner.

1. Please write your participant number in the box below. This can be found on your consent form.

1225B

2. Are you referring to

- ☒ Someone you are in a relationship with right now
☐ Someone you were once in a relationship with

3. What gender is your partner?

- ☐ Female
☒ Male

4. How old is your partner?

25 years old

5. What ethnicity is your partner

- ☐ Black (e.g., Black African, Black Caribbean, Black Other)
☐ Mixed Ethnicity
☐ Other
☒ South-Asian (e.g., Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Sri-Lankan)
☐ White (e.g., White British, White Irish, White Other)

6. How long have you been together? If you are referring to an ex-partner, please state how long you were together.

About two and half years

7. How often, in an average month, do you go out as a couple?

About 6 times - depends

8. Using the scale below, please indicate how satisfied you are with your relationship.

- ☐ 1 = Not all
satisfied ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☒ 6 ☐ 7 =
Extremely
satisfied

A.2 Example of male partner questionnaire

Relationship Quality Study

1. Relationship Quality

Please answer the following question about your partner or ex-partner.

1. Please write your participant number in the box below. This can be found on your consent form.

1225A

2. Are you referring to

- ☒ Someone you are in a relationship with right now
☐ Someone you were once in a relationship with

3. What gender is your partner?

- ☒ Female
☐ Male

4. How old is your partner?

25

5. What ethnicity is your partner

- ☐ Black (e.g., Black African, Black Caribbean, Black Other)
☐ Mixed Ethnicity
☐ Other
☐ South-Asian (e.g., Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Sri-Lankan)
☒ White (e.g., White British, White Irish, White Other)

6. How long have you been together? If you are referring to an ex-partner, please state how long you were together.

2.5 years

7. How often, in an average month, do you go out as a couple?

About 5-6 times

8. Using the scale below, please indicate how satisfied you are with your relationship.

- ☐ 1 = Not all
satisfied ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☒ 6 ☐ 7 =
Extremely
satisfied

A.3 Photographs of partners



Appendix B Example of norm experimental prime

EYE ON SOCIETY



UK Census 2011 Part III: Interethnic Marriages

In a series of reports investigating the meaning of the 2011 Census for Britons, *Alexander Harrison* examines the predicted rise of interethnic marriages and its consequences.

All you need is love. Well that's what the Beatles say. But just how true is this endearing sentiment?

In the latest census, interethnic marriages (those between people of different ethnic groups) are said to triple in number since the last census in 2001. Figures released this week by the Office for National Statistics show that 625,000 marriages - 6% of all marriages in the UK - are interethnic.

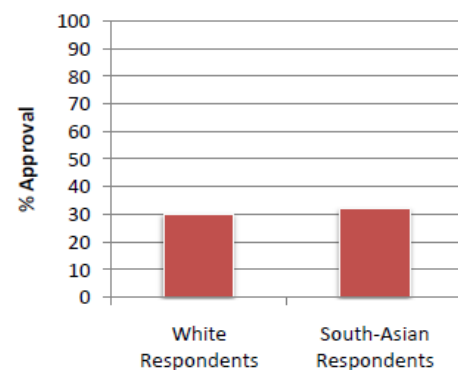
But what does this mean for Britain? Professor Keele of the University of Bath says that past research on the topic is mixed. "Some people view these relationships to be the sure sign that racism is slowly eroding and take hope from these relationships". However, he warns that, "For others, these relationships represent a threat to what is meant by ethnic identity. This can cause animosity towards the relationships and even toward different ethnic groups as a whole".

So, as the numbers grow, are we as a nation becoming more accepting of interethnic relationships and less prejudice? Or do these loving relationships, ironically, increase hostility and discrimination? After undertaking one of the largest surveys of its kind, Professor Keele has the answers.

"Together with Universities in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow and Belfast, we surveyed a total of 7247 British people about their feelings towards interethnic marriages. We found little explicit approval of the relationships, with just over 30% of the sample indicating that

they approved slightly or approved strongly of the relationships".

What's noticeable from the results is that participants from different ethnic groups showed similar levels of approval. Prof. Keele explains, "The results from the two largest ethnic groups, White-British and South-Asian British, show the approval ratings for interethnic marriages to be hovering around the 30% mark".



To find out what this disapproval means for interethnic couples, I asked Sarah and Rashid, an interethnic couple from Croydon, about their experiences.

Both say they have had to overcome family pressure not enter into their relationship. "My mum was most against it," comments Rashid, "She's still disappointed that I'm not with an Asian woman".

Sarah adds, "My family thought I should try and get a nice White man. They were shocked when I told them Rashid and I were getting married, but I think their disapproval has just made us stronger as a couple".

Next week, Alison Sunderland examines the issue of leaving home in UK Census Part IV: Leaving Home.

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